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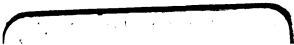
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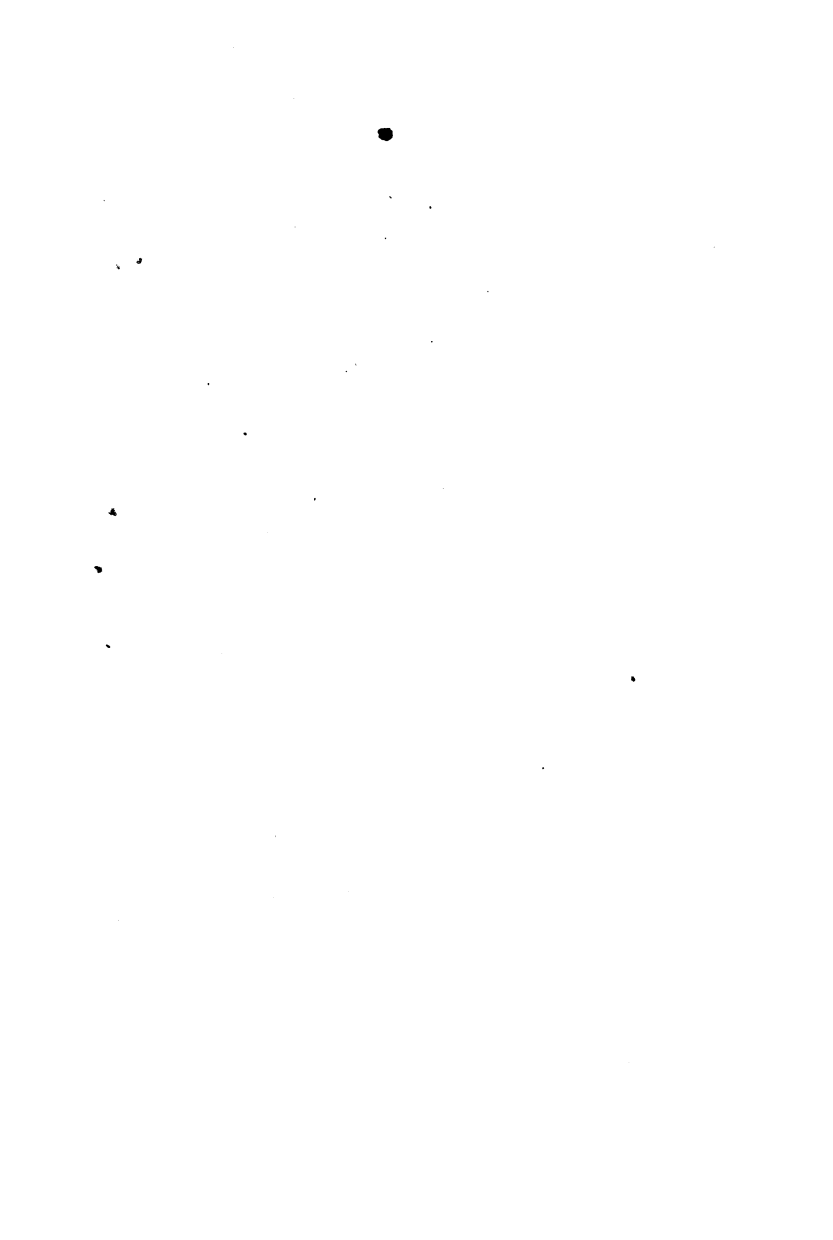
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OR,

ROUND ABOUT THE BUSH.



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DUNVARLICH:

OR,

ROUND ABOUT THE BUSH.

BY

DAVID MACRAE,

Author of "George Harrington," &c.

"Men are most willing to believe that which they most desire."—BACON.

Second Thousand.

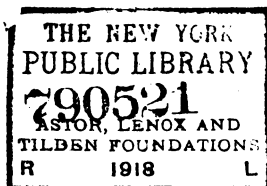
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THE Directors of the Scottish Temperance League having offered a prize of £250 for the best, and a prize of £100 for the second best, Temperance Tale, in reply to the advertisement, ninety-nine MSS. were received.

The following is the decision of the gentlemen who kindly consented to act as adjudicators:—

GLASGOW, *November 1st, 1864.*

Having been requested by the Directors of the Scottish Temperance League to adjudicate on their offer of a First Prize of £250, and a Second Prize of £100, for the best and second best Temperance Tales, and having attentively examined the whole manuscripts forwarded in answer to the advertisements, being ninety-nine in number, we award the First Prize to the Tale denominated

“BY THE TRENT,”

and the Second Prize to the Tale entitled

“ROUND ABOUT THE BUSH.”

ALEXANDER B. GROSART, *Minister.*

GEORGE HUNTER, *Minister.*

GEORGE M'ARTHUR, M.A., *Minister.*

JAMES STEWART, M.A., *Minister.*

NORMAN L. WALKER, *Minister.*

108 HOPE STREET,
GLASGOW, *7th April, 1865.*



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DUNVARLICH:

OR,

ROUND ABOUT THE BUSH.

CHAPTER I.

THE BLACK SQUALL.

EARLY in the forenoon of a certain summer day, in the year 1848, a trim little boat, rigged with a tiny main-sail and jib, put off from Doune Bay, on the Ayrshire coast, with her head towards Arran. It was a bright, sunny day, the wind blowing uncertainly from the south and south-west. The light skiff dipped and swayed restlessly to and fro, eluding, like a coy maiden, the sunny wavelets that leapt up to snatch a kiss from her as she passed; but, when she had left the shelter of the low headland and looked out upon the open sea, a stiffer breeze filled her white sails; and quickening her speed, and brushing the waters from her bow, away she flew, with every nerve and sinew strung, like a thing of life and purpose.

There were four persons in the boat—Lady Macdonald, of Dunvarlich; her son Gilbert, who had just returned from the Military Academy at Woolwich; and her daughter Mary, a bright, little, blue-eyed girl

of twelve; also a lad, who sat in the bow of the boat, to manage the jib and bear a hand with the oars, in the event of the breeze falling. Sir Charles Macdonald, who was spending the summer months on the west coast with his wife and family, had gone to Arran two days before, to have a day's grouse-shooting with the Duke; and they, according to arrangement, were going across to lunch at Brodick Castle and bring Sir Charles back with them. The run across was charming. The delicious blueness of the sky, the fresh sea-breeze, the swift motion of the dainty little craft cutting her way through the blue water that danced and sparkled in the sunlight, the whirr of the wild duck as it crossed their track, the sight of the distant sea-gulls floating like snow-flakes against the mountain sides,—filled them with a thousand sensations of delight.

About noon they found themselves under the bold cliffs of Arran, skimming lightly towards Brodick Bay.

"What a strange appearance the sea has, yonder in the distance," said Lady Macdonald, looking away towards the south.

Gilbert had been joining his little sister in a boat-song. He looked in the direction indicated, and immediately stopped. A remarkable change had certainly occurred. All across the horizon the sea was blackening portentously.

• "That's curious," said Gilbert. "It looks like the shadow of a cloud. And yet the sky is clear enough. My lad," he said, raising his voice, "do you know what that black streak in the horizon is?"

The lad looked. "It's a black squall, sir, I'm afraid."

"A black squall, is it?" said Gilbert, scanning it more attentively.

"It comes very fast, sir," said the lad; "we'd better let her head round a bit, and get inside the point."

Gilbert took his advice, and slackened the helm.

"Now, mother, you needn't look alarmed. We shall be at Brodick immediately. And, at any rate, in a taut little craft like this, we are as safe as on land."

The boat, as if it heard the compliment, dipped its cheek deeper in the water, and scoured landwards with accelerated speed. They entered the bay, and, as they neared the shore, they observed Sir Charles with a party of ladies and gentlemen who had come down to meet them, waiting on the slip. Signals were exchanged, and Gilbert brought the bow of the boat well up to the wind, to make the slip, if possible, without tacking.

"Take care! take care! you'll come against that little boat!" cried Lady Macdonald; but while she was speaking, they swept past a tiny two-oar skiff, that lay like a feather on the water; and in which there sat a little girl of about Mary's age, who was resting on her toy-like oars, watching them pass. The little girls looked eagerly at one another. Lady Macdonald also inspected the little stranger through her eye-glass.

"Really," she said, "a child like that ought not to be allowed out alone; in such a mere cockle-shell too!"

"She doesn't seem to have much fear herself," replied Gilbert.

"What a handsome little thing she is!" Lady Macdonald exclaimed. "Just look at those superb eyes of hers, how they gleam from under her straw-hat. She is surely not a Scotch girl, that."

"We shall have to tack before we can make that slip," interrupted Gilbert, who had been looking out over the prow, and now pressed the helm hard down. "Just change your seat to this side, mother, please, gently. There you are. All right. Now, my lad, mind the jib."

The moment for tacking had been fatally chosen. The boat lost way as she veered round to the wind. She was just turning her head, when a flying gust—the outrider of the coming storm—caught her sails, cuffed her right and left, and caused her to dip and sway backwards. It was a critical moment. A dark shadow was covering the sea. Gilbert saw that the squall was at hand. He sprang forward; thrust in a tholepin; and seized an oar, meaning to pull the boat round and let her drive. Too late. The shadow fell upon them. The sea was blackening, and beginning to creep and heave and roll below them like a monster when its anger is being roused. Gilbert was just in the act of pushing out the oar when the squall burst on them with terrific violence. There was a sudden rattling—a scream—a tumultuous rush of water—and in a moment the boat was upset. Gilbert, under water, blinded, and struggling madly to free himself from some entanglement, at length found himself at

the surface. The oar which he had relinquished was floating near him. With some difficulty he succeeded in laying hold of it. A boat—the little one they had passed a few seconds before, rocked and heaved on the sweltering water almost beside him: and through the water, that almost blinded his eyes, he caught sight of the dark-eyed girl drawing up a streaming form that he recognized as his sister's. Then a big wave rose up and engulfed him. He had scarcely with a convulsive struggle got his head above water a second time, and got a gasp of air, when, below him, in the trough of the wave, he saw something white come to the surface, and a hand rising from the water in a mute appeal for help. It was his mother! He saw her but for an instant, and then the wave, heaving him up, broke before him, and swept her from his sight. He pushed the oar from him, and struck out with frantic eagerness for the spot where she had disappeared. He dived: he thought he felt himself get hold of something; but his limbs seemed to lose their power: the waters choked him, blinded his eyes, roared thunderingly in his ears: a thousand wild thoughts rushed through his brain; darkness, through which there shot vivid streaks of light, swept heavily over him. This was the last sensation he could afterwards recall. Then consciousness left him, and oblivion swallowed him up.

* * * * *

Meantime, on the shore, there was terrible consternation. Sir Charles and his friends beheld with dismay the sudden capsizing of the skiff, and a rush was

instantly made to a fisherman's boat, that fortunately lay alongside the slip. The fisherman was on the shore. He heard the cry of alarm, ran down the slip, threw off the painter, jumped in after Sir Charles and the other gentlemen, and pulled madly to the spot. The rest of the party, clustered together in a terrified group, watched anxiously from the shore. They saw the intrepid little dark-eyed girl in the skiff pull swiftly to where Sir Charles's little daughter was struggling; saw her bend over the bow, catch the drowning child by her blue mantle as it floated on the wave, and draw her, apparently with great difficulty, into the boat. There were eager ejaculations of "Thank God, there's one safe! Bless that brave little heroine! Look, look—there, she is backing. She sees another!" The intrepid little girl had taken to her paddles again, and was backing, with astonishing alacrity, towards the spot where Gilbert had been seen clinging to the oar. Here she kept paddling rapidly about, looking for him in the water. The bay was all white with breakers now: and that tiny little skiff, sometimes toppling on the crest of a wave, and then sinking almost out of sight behind it, seemed in imminent danger of being swamped. At this juncture the fisherman's boat went dashing up. It stopped and turned: there was a pause; then sudden commotion on board, everybody pointing down in a particular direction; the fisherman was seen springing to the bow with a boat-hook in his hand, and, after several unsuccessful efforts, bringing something up to the surface. It turned out to be Gilbert and Lady Macdonald—the lad's hand locked round his

mother's arm. These, hanging heavily like dead bodies, were lifted by Sir Charles and another gentleman into the boat. Vain search was then made for the poor lad who had been with them. Two additional boats which put off from the shore to let the others come in, hovered about the place for some time, on the now wildly tempested water; but in vain. It was not till two days after that the body was washed ashore near Corrie.

Gilbert Macdonald soon returned to consciousness, but all the means employed to restore his mother were fruitless.

Her death was a terrible shock to those that were left; and sent them back, mourning, to a home that seemed for a time emptied of its light and joy.

The baronet had not forgotten, even under the stunning effects of this blow, to inquire after the heroic little girl who had been the means of saving the life of his daughter. He found that she was a stranger in Brodick, where her grand-aunt was spending the summer. She turned out to have a somewhat curious little history. Her mother had been the daughter of an English officer, and had, while visiting her father at Gibraltar, met a Spaniard—Francisco de Montalvan by name—a proud and handsome caballéro, for whom she conceived a sudden and romantic attachment. Her love was returned with ardour, and the two were married clandestinely. It turned out a most unfortunate match for the lady. Her father disowned her, and before she had been many months married, her husband, who led a wild

reckless life, was stabbed to the heart in a scuffle in the streets of Madrid. Poor, and almost friendless, she found her way to England, but sank under her misfortunes, and died; leaving her child to the charge of a maiden aunt. This lady, though enjoying but a slender income, was of extremely migratory habits; she had made the round of nearly all the watering-places in England and France, and at the time when the accident which has been described took place, was spending the summer at Brodick.

Sir Charles Macdonald was probably glad that the circumstances of the brave little girl allowed him to show his gratitude in some substantial way. He expressed his desire to adopt her into his own family; and to this proposal her aunt finally acceded. Accordingly, the baronet took little Evelyn Montalvan away with him to Dunvarlich Castle, which became thereafter her home. Years passed. Mary and she grew up together like sisters, loved each other devotedly, and confided all their secrets to one another. They were sent together to the same boarding-schools in England and France, and every summer they returned together to Scotland, to spend their holidays with Sir Charles, sometimes at the Castle, sometimes at Loch-Eulan—a romantic spot about ten miles from Dunvarlich, where the baronet generally stayed during the shooting season, the woods round Loch-Eulan being well stocked with game.

They were both handsome girls. Miss Montalvan quite one's ideal of a princess—tall, light, and beautiful, with a delightful dash of hauteur about her that

captivated because it seemed to repel. Her southern extraction became more apparent as she developed into womanhood, and could be recognized in her voice and carriage, in her quick impulsive nature, and in the dark splendour of her eyes. Mrs. Caie, the under-housekeeper at the Castle, used to speak with some awe of what she called her "high, prood, Spennish look;" and sometimes she would add, "Eh, but I would like to ha' seen her feyther, the grand Spennish callebaler!" But Mrs. Caie, though she felt at times, as she said, "feart-lik' o' the lassie," was extremely proud of her, and had innumerable stories to tell of the strange freaks into which she had led Mary, and of her dashing feats on horseback,—for Evelyn Montalvan would ride at anything, and laughed at dangers and impossibilities. "Impossible!" she exclaimed with a smile, when Sir Charles had given this as his opinion about a deep gully they were passing one day. "O nonsense, papa. Pluto doesn't think so. Do you, Pluto?"—and she clapped her horse's neck. "Come, show papa what your opinion is." And before the horrified baronet could stop her, she had dashed at the gully and cleared it at a bound. She swept away round in a semi-circle, and without a pause came back at the gully, bounded over it again, and was at the baronet's side before he had found breath enough to utter a word. "Pluto is a Chatham in his way," she said. "That's how he deals with impossibilities."

The baronet loved and delighted in Evelyn Montalvan as if she had been his own daughter. Between her and Gilbert, too, there sprang up an ethereal

friendship, dangerously allied to a deeper and more passionate sympathy. "Brother Gilbert" and "Sister Evelyn" they called each other; but the sunshine that broke from her lips when their eyes met filled his heart with a delight that had a deeper significance perhaps than either of them divined.

Gilbert, however, was very much away from home. After leaving the Military Academy, he obtained a commission in a light cavalry regiment—the 17th Lancers—quartered at that time in London. He grew up into a tall, handsome fellow: a man of iron nerve and will, much respected in the regiment both by officers and men. Somewhat stern in aspect and reserved in manner, Gilbert Macdonald had a warm and generous heart. You should have heard the officers of the mess speak of him. Poor Cornet M'Lavish, for instance, whom Gilbert had rescued fifty times from debt and disgrace; or Lieutenant Boldiston, who drank a great deal, was very reckless in his language, and rarely returned from a drunken debauch without either being followed by, or else himself breathing, terrific threats of vengeance, the precise reason or purpose of which he was often unable to recall next morning, even with the assistance of cold water towels round his head and several bottles of soda-water. He was fully alive to his obligations to Gilbert, and drank copiously to his health on all occasions, generally adding, in a loud voice, "Fine fellow, Macdonald. He has saved my bacon more than once. He's the best man in the regiment, is Macdonald. The best man in the regiment." And the swaggering lieutenant,

who confirmed these assertions by stronger expressions than we feel at liberty to repeat, would bring his glass down on the table with an emphatic rap, and look round the mess-table, as if to intimate that, if any gentleman there disputed this position, he would be glad to meet him next morning before breakfast, in a retired spot, with pistols.

CHAPTER II.

DESCRIBES SIR CHARLES MACDONALD OF DUNVARLICH AND HIS COMPLAINT.

SIR CHARLES MACDONALD of Dunvarlich was a man of no great strength of character, but he was naturally amiable in disposition; he was kind to the people on his estate; he was hospitable to his friends; and no man in or about Perth was more liberal in his donations to religious and benevolent objects. Although an Episcopalian himself, he had granted free sites for a Presbyterian and a Baptist church in the adjoining village of Auchinmuir. He had contributed his £50 towards the erection of another Presbyterian church (Rev. Mr. Flex's) in Perth. He was one of the patrons of the Charity School in the same town, and subscribed handsomely to its funds every year. When a soup-kitchen was opened one winter for the temporary relief of the poor, large quantities of vegetables were sent every day from Dunvarlich, and Sir

Charles drove into town, the first day, with Lady Macdonald, to taste the soup and enjoy the sight of the poor people flocking in with their tin cans and jugs. All this, along with his frank and courteous address, had made the baronet very popular in the town and amongst his own people.

Soon after the death of his wife, however, a change came over him. His health began to give way. Indigestion troubled him, then gout; and these maladies began to affect his temper. Every paroxysm of gout left him more irritable and ill to please than he had been before. The servants came in for the principal share of his ill humour; but neither the young ladies nor Gilbert (when he was at home) escaped, although in venting his spleen upon them he preserved a certain moderation of language which he did not always exercise towards the servants. Gilbert bore these outbursts with calmness, believing them to be the mere result of bodily ailment, which it was his duty, as well as his best policy, to submit to without complaint. The young ladies, on the other hand, would not, or else could not, conceal their distress; and pled with, and coaxed, the testy old baronet sometimes with, but oftener without, success. On recovering from his attack, Sir Charles was keenly sensible of the pain he had inflicted; and though too proud to acknowledge that he had been in the wrong, he generally tried to make compensation by an unusual display of affection. For instance, he brought the tears into Mary's eyes on one occasion by the harshness with which he told her that she was making "a

perfect fright of herself" with jewellery—though the poor girl had no jewellery upon her at the time except her ear-rings and a small gold brooch. He wouldn't tolerate it. He wouldn't sit down at the same table with her till she had gone and taken off her ear-rings, and made herself, as he said, "less like an Indian squaw." But the very week after, being well again, he brought out from Perth a box of beautiful and costly jewellery.

"Mary, my love," he said, "here is a nice pair of ear-rings for you—handsomer, I think, than your other pair. And here's a pair for you, Evelyn, my dear. Let me see how you look in them to-night. And these other trinkets, see if you can make any use of them."

Whereupon the old gentleman, finding himself likely to be smothered by the kisses which the delighted girls began to shower upon him, cried out, "Enough, enough! Away you go now, and try them on; and leave me to my newspaper till dinner-time."

In consequence of Sir Charles's uncertain health, his medical adviser was in constant requisition. For many years the family physician had been Dr. Innes, a kindly, stupid, and respectable old gentleman, who got into the practice of driving out once a week to Dunvarlich, mixing a tumbler of punch with the baronet, looking at his tongue, ordering some powders, and then taking his leave, to return the week after and go through the same routine. Two or three years after the fatal accident at Brodick, old Dr. Innes died, as even doctors will do, and his practice was taken up by a young and singularly talented practitioner of the name of Sutherland, who had but

recently taken his degree. Dr. Sutherland was a noble, genial-hearted fellow, with a kindly light in his eye and a cheerful tone in his voice, that often did more good than his prescriptions. His remarkable talents, his devotion to the duties of his profession, and his successful treatment of some extremely difficult and complicated cases, soon raised him to the head of his profession in Perth, and brought him patients from all parts of the country. It was not remarkable that a man of this stamp, having such frequent occasion to be at Dunvarlich, should soon have found himself on terms of cordial intimacy with the whole family. He and Gilbert became ardent friends; while between him and the baronet's daughter, girl though she still was, there sprang up a more tender and delicious sympathy, which gradually strengthened into love. For a long time neither Sir Charles nor Gilbert had any suspicion of this. The keener eye and more delicate instincts of Miss Montalvan were not so easily deceived; and before long she had elicited from Mary a confession of her feelings, and had become her confidante.

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIBES THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE CHARITY
SCHOOL, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

WE now come to the opening scene of the drama that follows. Six years have passed since the occurrence of that fatal accident at Arran, by which Sir Charles

lost a wife and found a daughter. The baronet's housekeeper has just been married to a neighbouring proprietor, and Mrs. Caie has been temporarily invested with the dignities of the vacant office. It is the year of the Crimean war, and Gilbert is away at the depôt of his regiment. Dunvarlich, however, is full of life and gaiety. George Fowler Macdonald, a half-brother of the baronet's—"Fowler," as they familiarly call him—a magnificent dashing fellow of between thirty and thirty-five, has been staying at the castle for more than two months, and is apparently too much fascinated by Miss Montalvan to think of going away. Two foreigners are also with them: Count Casco Wiski of somewhere, and Monsieur Lapetite, a sprightly little Frenchman, who at one time was Gilbert's companion on the Continent. He accompanies Count Casco Wiski as travelling companion, and on reaching England "adopted the libertie," as he said, of introducing the count to Gilbert, who has sent them to spend a week or two at Dunvarlich, and get his father's advice as to their best route through the Highlands. They have been received with open-handed hospitality, and have already seen most of the places of interest in the neighbourhood. They have been taken to see Loch-Eulan, with its bosky woods and foaming cataracts. Also the vitrified fort on Cadam hill, on the origin and history of which Sir Charles is very prosy, having read a book about it written by an Edinburgh antiquarian, who stayed at the Castle during the time of his investigations, and dedicated the work to his host. They have seen the meet in the

grand old avenue at Dunvarlich, and followed the hounds as far and as well as it was possible to do in a phaeton, and along the many-angled roads. Monsieur Lapetite, when he saw the dogs in full cry streaming over the wall, and the red coats flying through the woods, became quite frantic with delight, and had to jump up in the phaeton and clap his hands. It is fortunately just at the time of the Count and Monsieur Lapetite's visit to Dunvarlich that the directors of the Charity School have their annual dinner; Sir Charles is to occupy the chair, and his guests are delighted at the opportunity offered them of accompanying him and witnessing an exhibition of British philanthropy. As this dinner has a rather intimate connection with what follows in our narrative, and involves some serious consequences to our friend Dr. Sutherland, let us take the following description of it, given by the doctor himself, in one of his letters to Gilbert.

The Charity Dinner.

"We met in the public room of Richardson's hotel. Splendid turn-out of rubicund faces, white waistcoats, gold chains, and corporations. Major Hawtie was there, very frosty in his dignity at first. He asked about you, and said—uh—stroking his moustache—that there was going to be—uh—hot work—uh—in the Crimea, and he shouldn't wonder if—uh—your regiment—uh—was ordered out. So there's news for you, Gilbert. The dinner was sumptuous

but heavy. There was a general freshening up when dessert was over, and glasses began to tinkle all down the long table. We had some grand speeches. Our old friend, Bailie Morris, whose big red face glowed like the setting sun, proposed the health of the governor. There was no need, he said, waving his programme in the air, to describe what everybody knew—the singular tact, the energy, the personal virtues, the genius, he might almost say the—the—the talent of the governor. His name (Duff) would live in the annals of philanthropy. During all the time that Bailie Morris was speaking, poor Duff was staring wildly into his glass and fingering his watch-guard nervously, evidently making desperate efforts to recall to his mind something he had prepared to say in reply. He got up at last and assured us, with a ghastly expression of face, that this was, without exception, one of the happiest and proudest moments of his life. I was glad to hear him say so, for I should not have inferred it from his appearance. The secretary gave a very encouraging report of the present state of the society. The matron, it seems, is a woman among ten thousand. The teacher is everything that could possibly be wished. The inmates love him like a father: they dote upon the matron as if she were their mother. This is delightful. Everything, in fact, looks bright except the balance, which is, it appears, a trifle on the wrong side of nothing. Income, £640, expenditure, £692, including £40 for miscellaneous expenses. The miscellaneous expenses mean 10s. for currant-loaf to the children on New Year's

day, and £39, 10s. for the annual dinner to the directors. The treasurer regretted that two suitable children had to be refused admission from lack of funds, and one of them had since died. If you remember, I mentioned that poor child in my last letter. There is no doubt upon my mind that she died for want of proper food and shelter. The treasurer expressed a hope that, as each child only cost £10 per annum, the funds would be increased to meet such cases. Blunter, who has been on the committee for two years, got up and said that if the last annual dinner had been less costly the funds would have sufficed to admit these children. He thought the annual dinner should be given up. Blunter has a very disagreeable way of looking at things. He has not been re-elected. By nine o'clock the company were in a highly jubilant and benevolent state of mind. It was delightful to see Major Hawtie wringing the hand of Mowbles the haberdasher between both his own, and assuring him, in a voice thick with Campbelton whisky and emotion, that the delight he felt in his society was indescribable. Fowler, by the way, made a crack speech, and recited one of Macaulay's lays with so much pathos that Mowbles was quite overpowered, and had to get under the table—I suppose to weep. I didn't see him again that night. I think he must have omitted to rise.

“Old Close of Nether Hall was present, and took a prominent part in the proceedings. He exhibited his devotion to the noble cause of philanthropy by drinking a bottle of champagne, another bottle of old port,

and several jorums of whisky-punch. Also by cheering with indescribable enthusiasm. When the prosperity of the Charity School was drunk, his ardour became so great that he had to get up (Highland fashion) with one foot on his chair and the other on the table, and cheer till the perspiration came out upon his face. It is really delightful to see ardour like this in so good a cause. I believe Old Close would have drunk the whole of the succeeding toasts with equal enthusiasm, but unfortunately, while drinking to the success of Christian missions, he overbalanced himself, fell on the top of Count Casco Wiski, smashed that nobleman's glasses, and nearly broke his head into the bargain. Close is an eminent local philanthropist. He subscribes 2s. 6d. a year to this society, and occasionally, I believe, pays it.

"I must not forget to tell you about the sad blunder that poor Rumbleton of Camnoodle made. Mr. Burke, our new, dapper, little, kid-gloved clergyman, was there, of course; and M'Swilling of the Mains, was to propose 'The Clergy,' and couple it with the name of the Rev. Mr. Burke. I hear that M'Swilling had prepared a grand speech for the occasion, full of glowing descriptions of the progress of religion and morality in the land, and winding up with a graceful reference to Mr. Burke and his relationship to the celebrated statesman and orator whose name he bears. I understand that Mr. Burke really belongs to that family. While the toast immediately preceding this one was being responded to, I saw your father, who was in the chair, screwing his glass into his eye and looking care-

fully at all the faces down one side of the table and up the other—on the search, as it turned out, for M'Swilling. Then I saw him whisper to the Rev. Mr. Flex on his left, who immediately cocked his little head and glanced down the table on both sides, but with no better success. Then the head waiter was consulted; and, on search being made, it was found that M'Swilling was in the cloak-room, fast asleep on the top of the cloaks, and refusing to get up when roused. On being shaken up, and informed in a loud voice that his toast stood next upon the programme, his only response was a series of growls that threatened to assume the form of imprecations on the head waiter, Mr. Burke, and the company generally. In this emergency, Sir Charles pencilled a note to Rumbleton, requesting him to take M'Swilling's place, and not forget to wind up with a compliment to Mr. Burke, and a reference to his connection with 'the celebrated Burke.' I saw the note; for Rumbleton, who was sitting next me, laid it before me, and in an undertone—pointing to the last word 'Burke,' which was indistinctly written—asked me if that was 'Binkie?' I said, 'No: that's Burke. His family is related to the famous Burke.'

"'O, indeed!' he said, apparently with some surprise. 'Then do you think Burke was a good man?'

"'Undoubtedly,' I said. 'A good man and a great man. To be sure,' I added, 'the peculiar views he held gained him some enemies—some very bitter enemies. But when was there ever a great man of whom the same could not be said?'

‘Was never noble man but made ignoble talk:
He makes no friend who never made a foe.’

“Rumbleton looked rather dubious, but listened gravely, and made a note of the lines. ‘I may have occasion,’ he said, ‘to make use of that couplet. You have no objections?’ I told him, ‘None in the world.’ When the time came, Rumbleton rose with great majesty, and proposed the toast, with all the solemn pompousness that used to amuse us so much—you remember? He spoke of the genius of Mr. Burke, the popularity of Mr. Burke, the zeal and devotedness of Mr. Burke; and, as he went on, the plaudits of the company kindled his eloquence. He assured us that he had heard many preachers, both at home and abroad, but he had never heard a preacher superior—taking him all in all—to Mr. Burke. He inadvertently omitted to explain why, under these circumstances, he rarely shows himself in church, and sleeps when he does.

“‘And who,’ continued Rumbleton, looking proudly round, ‘who has not heard of his connection with the celebrated Burke? (Great applause.) I hold that Burke was a great man and a good man. (Cheers.) No doubt he had enemies. But where is the great man who has not? As the poet sings,—

‘Was never noble man but made ignoble talk:
He makes no friend who never made a foe.

(Immense applause.) Some thought,’ continued Rumbleton, clearing his throat, ‘that the peculiar views

Burke held on the subject of providing bodies for the Edinburgh doctors'—

"A shock struck me as from a voltaic battery. Burke! The Edinburgh doctors! conceive it! I didn't know what on earth to do—whether to blush or to explode with laughter. A deathly stillness had fallen suddenly upon the company. Mr. Burke's face became fiery red. Every eye was turned upon Rumbleton with an awful expression. He saw the sudden change, seemed puzzled for a moment, and then proceeded to relieve us from misapprehension.

"‘These peculiar views of Mr. Burke's,’ he said—his pompousness somewhat disturbed by the increasingly portentous looks he encountered on every side—‘these peculiar views had—at least to some people—I say, mark me, only to *some* people, an ugly look.’

"‘Stop, man!’ I whispered, twitching his coat-tail convulsively. ‘That was another man.’

"Rumbleton made a powerful effort to recover his composure, and waved his hand majestically to the company, as if to request patience, and he would put everything to rights immediately.

"‘I said to *some* people they had an ugly look,’ he repeated, raising his voice. ‘But my own opinion is, and I think I am justified in saying that the opinion of this company is, that it was a different person—that Mr. Burke wasn't the man (great confusion)—that it was Hare that did it all!’

"The scene of uproar that ensued was perfectly indescribable. It was not till Rumbleton, by some

means or other, had been got out of the way, that anything like cordiality was restored.

"Rumbleton sent for me early this morning to feel his pulse. When I went into his room, I observed, away on a side-table, the first volume of the *Popular Encyclopedia*, which he seemed to have been consulting. He said with a ghastly smile that he believed he had made a curious mistake last night, in consequence of the whisky he had drunk. He was convinced that he ought never to indulge in more than one glass of whisky-toddy, or at the most, two. It was a curious psychological fact, but if he went beyond that, he invariably found himself beginning to confuse names, dates, and things of that sort. 'The idea,' he exclaimed, 'of confounding Burke the murderer, with the distinguished philosopher and writer, whose admirable speeches and whose *Essay on the Beautiful and Sublime* I have known from boyhood—from infancy I might say. Ha, ha! it was very amusing. You must explain the thing to Mr. Burke and the others when you see them.'

"Some of them I have seen already. Pipsley of Pipsley Lodge, who drank all the toasts, and is said to have been taken home in the bottom of a cab, I found rather unwell.

"'That salmon, doctor,' he said, when I was feeling his pulse; 'confound that salmon! It has played the mischief with me. I ought never to touch salmon after four in the afternoon.'"

A few days subsequent to the receipt of the letter from which the foregoing extract is made, Gilbert was

startled by the receipt of another, of two days' later date, also from the doctor. It ran to the following effect:—

“MY DEAR GILBERT,—I regret to say, that since my last was posted, a rupture has taken place between your father and me, which is likely to terminate my professional connection with the family. I regret it exceedingly; but I do not see how I could have acted otherwise than I have done. The case is this. Let me state it frankly, and leave you to judge for yourself if I have done right or wrong. Your father had an attack of the gout after the Charity School dinner, and sent for me. I was afraid that it would be so when I saw him drink the toasts so freely. For several months past I have been persuaded that your father's gout, and other ailments, were the results of over-indulgence in wine; and I recommended him to confine himself to a very small quantity of white wine at dinner. My instructions, I found, had not been attended to; and now I felt it to be my duty to prohibit him the use of stimulants altogether, and tell him plainly that his illness was the result of his own indulgence. Accordingly I did so. I regret to say that he listened with impatience; declared that his health wouldn't stand without his glass of wine; that he knew it wouldn't, and had told me so already; that I was entirely in the wrong: that I was interfering in the most unwarrantable manner with his private comfort, and that he would not submit to it. I remonstrated: but he only became more irritated; and

at last used language to me that rendered quite superfluous the request which immediately followed—that I should quit the Castle, and not return till sent for. How this occurrence, my dear Gilbert, may affect your sentiments towards me, I cannot tell. I shall await your next letter with anxiety. But allow me to assure you that it will never affect my regard either for you or for the rest of the family, nor obliterate my fond recollections of the days I have spent at old Dunvarlich. Ever yours,

“EDWARD R. SUTHERLAND.

“P.S.—Since penning the above, Sir Charles has sent for my bill; so my professional connection with the family may be considered finally at an end.”

CHAPTER IV.

FOLLOWS FOWLER AND MISS MONTALVAN INTO THE WOOD.

A FEW days after the events referred to in Dr. Sutherland's letters, a light phaeton, drawn by a beautiful pair of piebald horses, drove round to the great hall-door of Dunvarlich Castle; flashing along the gravelled terrace, in the bright sunshine of a beautiful spring forenoon. A groom followed, presently, leading two horses—one a beautiful, spirited palfrey, richly caparisoned and saddled for a lady; the other a magnificent black steed with flowing mane, that champed the bit, as it came along with a short, stamping, impatient trot. An expedition had been planned to the old Abbey

of Dunvarlich, which stood embosomed in romantic woods, on the summit of a gentle eminence, about half-way between the Castle and Loch-Eulan. The party soon made its appearance. Monsieur Lapetite, with his thin face, aquiline nose, and delicate black moustache creeping down the corners of his little mouth: Fowler, tall and handsome, looking like a giant beside the dapper little Frenchman; Pipsley of Pipsley Lodge (one of the Forfarshire Pipsleys; "a man with blood in his veins," as he used to say himself)—and the two young ladies. Mary looking quieter than usual, and Miss Montalvan, exquisitely beautiful in her purple riding habit, her luxuriant hair hanging in graceful plaits behind, and a plume of ostrich feathers nodding gracefully over her brow.

"Ah, tres-magnifique!" exclaimed the little Frenchman, clapping his hands, when he saw Fowler's big steed: "beautiful—beautiful quadruped!"

"Perhaps you would prefer it to a seat in the carriage," said Fowler, with a grim smile, as he drew on his gloves.

"No, no, no! tenk you ver' moch," cried Mons. Lapetite. "I not feel disposed to equestrian to-day."

Miss Montalvan mounted into the saddle of the palfrey, Fowler took the reins from the groom's hands and leaped upon the black steed, the others got into the carriage, and away they went—the groom looking after them with silent admiration (of the horses) as they went merrily down the avenue.

We have already stated that Fowler was a half-brother of the baronet's. More definitely, he was a

son, by a second marriage, of old Sir Gilbert Macdonald, the father of the present baronet. Fowler had some little property in Sussex, left him by his mother. He had also been left several thousands by Sir Gilbert; but he ran through the money in a very few years, farmed his small estate, and went to America. There he continued his reckless career as far as his means would allow, and occasionally farther. The strange pride which, in spite of all his vices, he continued to feel in his own country, and the ignorant contempt he felt and never concealed for "the Yankees," led him into frequent trouble; but Fowler was a man whose personal strength and courage made him too formidable to be trifled with. Nevertheless, he made several very narrow escapes; and was said to have shot a man in Baltimore, and taken part in more than one discreditable outrage in the streets of New York. These were only rumours; but no one who looked at his bold defiant front, and marked the fire that flashed from his eyes when anything roused him, would have found it difficult to believe all that was told of him, and more. Fowler had returned from America only a few months before, and having come to see his relations at Dunvarlich, had been evidently fascinated by Miss Montalvan's beauty, and had not as yet spoken of taking his leave. He was like a lion led by a string of flowers. The singular beauty of that girl exercised a spell over him, to which his roving and hitherto intractable and turbulent nature yielded a strange and joyful submission.

The pic-nic party had got about half-way to the

Abbey, when Fowler, who had fallen a little way behind with Miss Montalvan, said—"Our horses are restive. Suppose we have a canter over the hill yonder. We can meet the others at the Abbey."

"Nothing I should like better," said Miss Montalvan, gaily.

Fowler spurred forward to the carriage, where Mons. Lapetite was in ecstasies about the landscape, the air, Miss Macdonald, Mr. Pipsley's signet-ring, everything! Fowler smilingly interrupted him for a moment to mention the new arrangement; then turned, and signalling to Miss Montalvan, leapt his horse over the low wall by the road-side. Miss Montalvan's spirited palfrey, as if anticipating the wish of its fair rider, cleared the wall at a bound, and away the two went, cantering down into the valley. They came to a stream that went brawling along the bottom, and stopped to let their horses drink.

"Mary looks dull to-day," said Fowler.

"You know why, I suppose," said Miss Montalvan.

"I can guess. Dr. Sutherland's dismissal, eh?"

She nodded.

"And does she really love him so truly?" Fowler asked.

"Love!—she adores him," exclaimed Miss Montalvan, with enthusiasm. "He is everything that she delights in—high-principled, talented, unselfish, kind—a gentleman in every sense of the word. He is her ideal; her thought by day, her dream by night."

"O happy, to be so loved!" cried Fowler, with sudden fervour. "To be so loved—by one!"

A slight flush came into Miss Montalvan's face.

"He is worthy of it all," she said. "He is one of the noblest men I have ever met."

"Mary and I go round sometimes with little things for the poor," she resumed after a pause, "and we have come, a hundred times, upon proofs of his self-sacrifice and generosity. Only last week we came upon a poor girl—a sempstress—who could not speak of his kindness without tears in her eyes. She had been living on a miserable pittance, and had often to work day and night even for that. Her health began to fail her, so she went and consulted Dr. Sutherland. He gives an hour a day for gratuitous advice, so she went then. Dr. Sutherland saw at once, I suppose, that it was a too poor and meagre diet that had brought her down. He told her to return at four—that's his dinner-hour—and when she came, he said he was just sitting down to dinner, and she must have some with him, and he would examine her afterwards. So, after dinner, he questioned her, felt her pulse, and so on, and then gave her a pill-box, and told her with a smile to take one of these every day at dinner time, it was all she needed, and when these were done she was to come back and let him see her again. Well, she went home, and on opening the box, found in it—what do you think?—ten shillings!"

"Ha, ha! good!" said Fowler. "I think more of the man for that."

"And you may. We did," said Miss Montalvan warmly. "I suppose he thought it would be mockery to tell the poor creature to take a more generous diet,

when he knew she hadn't the means to do it. He has got a better situation for her since then. And that's only one in a hundred cases that we have heard of."

Fowler twitched his horse's reins. "That bridle-path through the woods there takes us to the Abbey, doesn't it?" he asked.

"It does. We can skirt the wood or go that way, as you please."

"Let us go through the wood," said Fowler. "The sun is on your face. He loves to look upon it. Who would not?"

She said nothing, but, urging her palfrey across the stream, rode at Fowler's side into the wood.

"What brought that shadow into your face just now?" asked Fowler.

"Was there a shadow?" she replied with a smile. "Well, no wonder. I was thinking of this quarrel between the doctor and Sir Charles. I am very much distressed about it. Poor Mary wept like to break her heart last night. Don't you think you could bring about a reconciliation, Mr. Fowler? I want to speak to you about that. Don't you think you could manage it? I have tried, and tried again, but to no purpose. I feigned a headache the day after the quarrel and sent for the doctor, but he sent me back a private note saying, that, after what had occurred, he could not possibly return to the Castle except at Sir Charles's express desire. I have tried to coax Sir Charles, but I cannot do that as Mary can, and Mary's feelings of delicacy, of course, shrink from the

attempt, in the present case. If Gilbert had only been here! But I think you might manage it. Will you try?"

"I will," replied Fowler earnestly. "It is enough that you desire it. I don't think I have any chance of success when you have failed. But I will make the attempt. Your wish is my law?"

Miss Montalvan coloured slightly again. They were deep in the woods now. The soft shadows of the trees floated and swam on the ground at their horses' feet.

"I cannot bear to see poor Mary so downcast," said Miss Montalvan. "She is ordinarily so lively—the very life and soul of Dunvarlich. If you only knew her as I do," she added warmly.

"I think I know her pretty well. And I admire her very much, I assure you. Still, speaking of ideals, Mary is not exactly what I should call my highest."

"No?" said Miss Montalvan archly, "then what may your ideal be?"

"My ideal?" Fowler repeated, turning his eyes suddenly on the beautiful girl beside him, and beginning to speak with a warmth that could not be mistaken, "let me see. Eyes superb in lustre and expression, dark flowing hair, the neck and bust of Hebe, a form of exquisite mould, full of grace and symmetry, a look of poetry, a soul of empyrean fire, the exquisite being that Praxiteles, when he sculptured his divine Diana, dreamt of, but could not produce."

He paused, there was a flush on his face and on hers.

"Such," he continued with increasing earnestness, "such is my ideal—long my hope, long my dream—found realized at last. Realized! more than that, spiritualized, glorified, in the face, the form, the soul, of Evelyn Montalvan!"

A blush, that made her look more divinely beautiful than before, rose into Miss Montalvan's face. She lifted her eyes suddenly to his, with a look in which admiration and love were strangely mingled with virgin modesty and pride. It seemed as if, in that moment, her heart had been carried by storm. He saw it.

"Evelyn!" he cried, with kindling enthusiasm, as he reined in his fiery steed and grasped her hand. "Evelyn! you love me—thank heaven!—you love me! I know it. I feel it. O now, for the first time in life, I feel the exultation, the joy, the glowing rapture, of reciprocated love!"

He drew her towards him, and kissed her. She yielded, with glowing cheek.

"Evelyn, my noble, my beautiful girl!" he said, in a low but eager voice, "you will link your fate with mine. Say you will. Wild and gloomy my life has been, but grander destinies shall open before me now. Dear Evelyn, say the word."

He paused. He felt the pressure of her hand.

It was enough. In that brief moment the solemn compact was made. Fowler took off his hat, and shaking back his dark locks, turned his face for a moment up to the glorious sun.

"O thrice happy!" he cried, "How my soul bounds upward! What a new life is this! Old things are

passed away. Thank God! the gloomy world is filling with life and glory. Come, Evelyn, my own, this is too much for human nature. I cannot rest. Let us give our horses the rein."

They had lingered so long in the wood that the carriage was at the Abbey before them: and Pipsley, of Pipsley Lodge, who was a great wag in his own way, began to quiz Miss Montalvan about the delay; but no one imagined how serious an event in her life had taken place since they parted half-an-hour before. Fowler was in boisterous spirits—got up games, sang songs, recited, and was the life and soul of the party—beguiling even Mary into merriment. They rambled about the Abbey, and Fowler kept them all laughing at a ludicrous imitation he gave of a guide describing the various parts of the building. The little Frenchman clapped his hands, and laughed till the tears were trickling down his face.

"Oh, stop, stop, stop! Monsieur Folair," he cried at last. "You shall kill me with your comique!"

CHAPTER V.

SIR CHARLES FINDS THE PROPER REMEDY FOR HIS COMPLAINT.

WHILE this sport was going on at the Abbey, Sir Charles Macdonald and Count Casco Wiski were sitting in the library at Dunvarlich, this being the room which the baronet used as a private parlour.

The ponderous count, whose head had been slightly cut by the accident referred to in Dr. Sutherland's letter, presented a somewhat ludicrous spectacle—his rueful visage and bushy whiskers being tied up like a bunch of heather in a large white handkerchief, the ends of which stuck up from the top of his head like rabbits' ears. Sir Charles, with his legs swathed in thick flannel, was sitting close to the table in an invalid's chair that moved on little wheels. He had been telling the count that the Rev. Mr. Burke had strongly recommended him to try mesmerism for his gout, having known many persons cured by it, and had undertaken to speak to a mesmerist at present in Perth, and send him out this forenoon. Sir Charles had also been describing (in the tone of irritation which persons suffering physical pain, or worry of any kind, are apt to fall into) the amount of torment he had endured from gout. The count joined in the conversation as far as his limited knowledge of English would allow.

"You for a loang time haf soffered from the same cahs?" he inquired, in his deep, sluggish voice.

"I have suffered from it," said Sir Charles, passing the wine decanter to the count, "for more than five years: almost from the time of Lady Macdonald's melancholy death. The disease, in fact, had its origin in the shock I got then. You are aware, Count," he added, in a lower and graver tone, "that Lady Macdonald was drowned?"

"Ah, yees, yees!" replied the count dolefully, lifting up his eyes and hands together, and then allowing one

of the latter to subside slowly and naturally upon the wine-decanter. "Ver', ver' sad!" and he filled his glass.

Sir Charles gave the count a brief narrative of the disaster.

"When we reached the spot where they sunk," he continued, "I saw something which I knew to be them almost under the boat. I plunged down, got a hold of them, and with great difficulty brought them to the surface. It was a miracle, the fisherman said, that I was not drowned myself. The shock, however, was too much for me, in my then rather feeble state of health. Gout supervened, and I have never been quite free from it since."

The reader will have observed that Sir Charles's account of the part he had himself taken in the affair, differed very considerably from the truth. The fact was, that Sir Charles had been in such a dreadful flurry that he had never had any very distinct recollection of the way in which the bodies had been got into the boat. At first he told the story very nearly as he heard others tell it: but, having to repeat it very frequently, he did not let it lose in the telling. His own share in the matter became gradually more and more conspicuous. In his first version of the story he had simply put down his hands to help in dragging the bodies over the gunwale: in a subsequent version he represented himself as plunging down his arms: then he got himself half out of the boat, then out of it altogether; and now, as we have seen, he had got the length of diving down, at the imminent risk of his

own life, and bringing the bodies to the surface. He had also introduced the fisherman as saying that his escape was a miracle; and as it would have been really a miracle had the thing occurred at all—for Sir Charles could no more swim than he could fly—it was just as appropriate in the fisherman's mouth, as in his own or any other body's. Thus the story had changed marvellously; but, amidst all its changes, it retained in Sir Charles's mind a complete identity, like that of the human being or Condillac's stocking; and there is little doubt that Sir Charles, when he told it to the count, believed every word of it to be true.

Sir Charles went on to describe the loss he had sustained in Lady Macdonald's death—Count Casco Wiski draining his glass, in solemn and sympathetic silence, to the memory of that lamented lady. The baronet proceeded to thank Heaven that, at least, his children had been saved, and to express his admiration of the heroic conduct of Evelyn Montalvan.

"Fill your glass, count," he said parenthetically, perceiving that his guest was trifling with a few grapes upon his plate, and that his glass was empty.

"Tenk you," said the count slowly. "I not care for more. I vill jost take a full of my tooth of dis cognac—jost to disperse the taste of the voin." As he spoke he laid his hand upon another decanter, as if he had not observed that it was empty.

Sir Charles took the hint, and touched a little spring bell that stood on the table by his side. It was answered by a smart, under-sized youth of a rather ancient and knowing aspect, with his hair turned up

at the corner of each eye, and his closely-fitting jacket glittering with long rows of silver buttons.

"Get this replenished, Fobbles," said the baronet. "M'Lodle knows the sort."

Fobbles promptly picked up the decanter and disappeared. Fobbles—Mr. Fobbles, as they called him in the kitchen—was a cockney youth who enjoyed a high reputation amongst the other servants for classical learning and vast knowledge of the world. At one time he had been a work-boy in Sadlers Wells Theatre, where his father had been an actor. He afterwards got employment in some metropolitan hotel; where Gilbert Macdonald saw him, took a fancy to him, and so brought him to Scotland, and installed him as "buttons" in Dunvarlich.

"I never take brandy myself," said Sir Charles, when Fobbles had placed the decanter on the table, replenished; "it doesn't agree with me. But if this is the L'or Extrait du Vin, you will relish it. Let me see." Sir Charles, as he spoke, held the decanter up between his eye and the light—"I—I hope this is it."

He poured out a glassful and tasted it, simply to satisfy his mind on this point. When the flavour is delicate it is sometimes a matter of difficulty to settle, by the mere taste, whether a given liqueur is or not the precise variety it claims to be. Sir Charles had to taste again. Even yet he seemed in doubt. He tasted a third time; and sip, sipped with a profoundly critical expression of face. "This doesn't seem exactly"—he took another taste—"and yet surely it"—another taste—"ah, yes. Yes. That's it." Sir Charles

passed the decanter across. "Help yourself, count; you will find its flavour good, I think. For my own part," added the baronet, draining his glass, "I find it better not to taste brandy."

"Deess is ver' superfine-excellent," said the count, in his usual sluggish way, when he had helped himself and put the glass to his lips.

"I thought you would relish it," said the baronet. "It is Gilbey's importation. The Rev. Mr. Flex—that tall, thin gentleman with little black eyes and spectacles, whom you met at the annual dinner on Tuesday—recommended me to Gilbey some time ago. Mr. Flex is a dissenter, but a very fair preacher, and an excellent connoisseur in brandies."

At this moment, Fobbles came in with the silver card-tray. Sir Charles picked up the card upon it, and examined it through his glass.

"'Professor Wingwie'—oh, this is the mesmerist," the baronet said, and looked at his guest.

"I will retire," said the count, getting up, and readjusting the handkerchief in which his head was tied.

"Never mind, count; there is no occasion. Show the gentleman up, Fobbles."

"I will retire. Allow me," said the count. "I will prefer go in the garden, and consume a smoag;" and so, with a bow, he rolled lazily out.

He was scarcely gone when Fobbles ushered into the room a large, solemn man, with a heavy crop of reddish whiskers, a shock of red hair flaming upwards, and a look betokening a profound conviction that he was in possession of all knowledge and all mysteries.

After one or two commonplace remarks, Sir Charles came to the point.

"Mr. Burke would tell you that I am troubled with gout."

"He did."

"And do you think you can do me any good?"

"I have little doubt of it, sir," said the mesmerist, profoundly. "But it will be necessary first that we make a thorough diagnosis. I never like to venture an opinion except upon an accurate diagnosis. No, sir. It depends, you see, upon the precise nature, source, and location of your complaint, sir, whether and in what form my treatment is applicable."

Hereupon the professor brought forth a pair of spectacles, and after wiping the glasses with extreme deliberation and care, he put them on, and put on a still more searching and professional look along with them.

"Perhaps, sir, for the greater convenience of making our diagnosis, you will be kind enough to turn towards the light."

Sir Charles put his finger upon the spring-bell, and Fobbles reappeared. Fobbles turned the baronet in the direction required—the chair, as we have said, moving easily on wheels. The professor, after a glance at the window, planted himself in front of Sir Charles, and, bending down, looked with a keen and somewhat ferocious expression into the baronet's eyes. There was perfect silence for about half a minute.

"I see the evidence of pain," said the professor, taking a breath. "You suffer pain, sir."

"I do—frequently; particularly in the lower joints."

The professor nodded, as much as to say, Just so; I could have told you that. He felt Sir Charles's hand and head, and reflected for a moment.

"You are troubled with drowsiness," he said, in a tone of unhesitating assurance.

"No," said the baronet, dubiously; "I cannot say that I am."

"You ought to be, sir," returned the mesmerist. "Think for a moment. Are you not, at times, oppressed with drowsiness?"

Sir Charles thought for a little. "Well, after dinner I do feel a little drowsy. At night, too, if I sit up later than usual."

"Exactly, sir!" said the professor, with a nod of satisfaction. "Yes; I was sure of it."

"Then as to your general symptoms," he added, his brows contracting into an expression of great profundity, "I should say that—uh—that you feel—a—a—"—the professor moved out his hands in explanatory jerks, and looked at Sir Charles inquiringly.

"Well, yes. I *do* feel a—a—"—

"A sort of—that is"—suggested the professor.

"Just so. A sort of—a species of—you understand?"

"Quite, sir, quite," said the professor, with a satisfied nod. "It is just as I anticipated. Your system, sir, is disordered. But I am glad to say that it is within the resources of mesmerism to rectify it completely. The cause of this complaint, sir, is very manifest."

Sir Charles's brows lowered. He thought he saw the mesmerist glance at the decanters on the table as he spoke.

"What, then, do you suppose the cause to be?" he asked sternly.

"A very common case, sir," replied the professor. "It is the want of vitality. A complaint, sir, that I have constant occasion to deal with."

"Ah, the want of vitality," repeated the baronet in a blander tone. "What, precisely, do you mean by that, Dr. Wingwie?"

"The vital functions are not sufficiently active, sir. They need some stimulus—some infusion of strength. This accounts for the pain you suffer. The nature of pain, sir, is not sufficiently understood. Pain is nothing more nor less than the result of some check upon the flow of vitality. For instance, if you press any part of your body (Allow me to take your finger. Thank you, sir), and if I press it so,"—

"Hey, hey! stop, man. That's painful."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the professor, letting go the finger, "I was not aware that your nervous system was so extremely susceptible. The pain is gone now, I hope."

"It is, quite."

"Well, sir, that illustrates my meaning. The pressure of my fingers upon yours impeded the flow of the electro-mesmeric current at the point compressed. In other words, the vitality at that point was checked or lowered for the time, and you felt pain. So in all cases. Whenever the vitality is lowered, no matter

by what cause, the result is pain. Exert yourself too severely—in other words, exhaust your vital energy, and thereupon the functions act languidly, and you feel pain. Swallow drugs, which inflame the functions to unnatural activity, and so lead to exhaustion, and again you have pain. Starve a man, his vital force runs dry, and the result is pain.”

“Yes, no doubt,” said the baronet, evidently impressed with the profundity of this reasoning. “There is truth in what you say.”

“It is the philosophy of pain,” said the professor with majestic calmness, as he re-adjusted his spectacles.

“Then, in my case”—

“In your case, sir, there is, as I have said, a lack, a deficiency, of vitality. The consequence is that you feel pain in your small joints, where the nerves are most sensitive.”

“I do, precisely.”

“Precisely,” said the professor with a nod. “All that you need, therefore, is an increase of vitality, and this, I think, I can readily effect by infusing into your system some of my own vital, or mesmeric force.”

“And is that your whole *régime*, doctor? No medicine nor,”—

“Medicine, my dear sir!” exclaimed the professor, “nothing could be worse. Medicine exhausts the vitality. What you need is its increase.”

“I confess that I like your system, doctor,” said the baronet with much cordiality. “It appeals to one’s common sense. Now, sir, would you believe it,

my last medical adviser, Sutherland, whom I have dismissed, dosed me with colchicum!"

"Bad, very bad," said the professor gravely. "But it is just the old system."

"Worse than that, he wanted me to give up my ordinary nourishment, my ordinary glass of wine at dinner!"

Professor Wingwie was surprised. He could scarcely have thought that a man with any knowledge of the human system would have taken a step like that in Sir Charles's case.

"Well, sir, that was what he did," said the baronet warmly, "but I refused to obey such an order. I knew better. Give up my glass of wine! Why, sir, my system could never have come through what it has without it. Never."

"I have no doubt it does you good, sir," said the professor. "You need a generous diet to keep up your vitality. It is not enough, in your present state of health, not quite enough, but it helps undoubtedly. And I trust it will suffice by and by."

"I am glad to hear you say that," replied Sir Charles, and he spoke with the utmost sincerity. "I can see the force of your reasoning. I only regret that I had not heard of your system sooner. Excuse me, I should have offered you a glass of wine."

The professor took a glass without much pressure, and when it was done he took another without any.

"I am extremely glad," he said, "that your case has been brought under my notice in time. The diminution of vitality, sir, is a complaint that does not bear to be trifled with."

It may be observed, parenthetically, and as a curious fact, that *every* case, no matter what its complexion, to which Professor Wingwie was called, turned out, like this one, to be a case of reduced vitality. Professor Wingwie also discovered invariably that mesmerism was precisely the treatment for it—and finally, and as one might say providentially, that the case had come into his hands “just in time.”

“No, sir, it is a complaint that does not bear to be trifled with,” repeated the professor gravely; “it comes to be a most dangerous complaint when not properly attended to.”

“Eh, dangerous, do you say, doctor?” exclaimed the baronet looking somewhat alarmed.

“Dangerous! why, my dear sir, people are dying of it every day. People don’t know it. But so it is. The fact is, sir, the doctors of the old school don’t understand this malady, and as it shows itself in a great variety of forms, they call these forms by different names, treat them as different diseases, and classify the deaths accordingly.”

“That surely argues a gross want of observation in the medical faculty,” said Sir Charles.

“Well, sir, we must not be too hard upon them,” replied the professor apologetically. “We must remember that they are trained in a bad school, and indoctrinated with theories which warp their judgment. However, we are making an impression upon them, sir, gradually.” When Professor Wingwie said “we,” he meant himself.

“In your case,” he resumed confidentially, “I sus-

pect, judging from the diagnosis I have made, that if your complaint had been constitutional, a complete cure would have been impossible."

Sir Charles fixed his eyes on the professor with an air of concern. "Yes, sir, I fear it would,"—that functionary went on—"had it been constitutional. But I am inclined to think"—there was, we may remark, no necessity at all for thinking, as the particulars had been given him by Mr. Burke—"I am inclined to think, from the diagnosis, that your gout must have had its origin in some shock."

Sir Charles, who was in the act of raising his glass to his lips, arrested his hand, and looked at the professor with keen interest.

"Some heavy pressure," continued the mesmerist, "or perhaps some sudden shock to the nervous system. For, naturally, your constitution is strong and healthy."

"Dr. Wingwie, sir," exclaimed the baronet, setting down his glass emphatically, "you have hit the mark. You are right. And let me add, sir—for I like to give every man the credit he deserves—you are the first medical man who has perceived the real cause of my complaint. It *was* a shock, sir—a shock I received in attempting to rescue my late wife, Lady Macdonald, from drowning. I had to dive and bring her up; and the chill, the superhuman exertion, the fearful anxiety, and the fatal result to Lady Macdonald, gave me, all together, such a shock that my system has never yet recovered from it."

"Ah!" said the mesmerist, raising his eyebrows, "now the case is clear as day. I was sure something

of the sort must have happened. Sure of it. Well, sir, I am glad it is so—very glad.”

“Then you think it will be more easily dealt with.”

“Undoubtedly. Still, much will depend upon your susceptibility to mesmeric influence. If you are readily mesmerized, we shall soon effect a cure. It might perhaps be well, sir, to make a preliminary experiment now. That would allow me to speak with more certainty of the future.”

Sir Charles was quite willing, and touched the bell for Fobbles.

“How long will the experiment last?” he inquired.

“From ten to thirty minutes, according to your susceptibility,” replied the professor; “but if I succeed, as I hope to do, in throwing you into the *coma* or mesmeric sleep, you may remain in it for an hour or two. I will wait, however, to see you comfortably out of it.”

With the assistance of the active Fobbles, Sir Charles was stretched upon the sofa, and Professor Wingwie began operations. The mode in which he went to work was this. He planted himself opposite to the baronet, with his legs pretty far apart; turned up his cuffs at the wrist; and then, telling Sir Charles to keep his eyes fixed upon the ceiling, began to make passes over his prostrate patient from head to foot with prodigious earnestness and solemnity, making his hands skim over Sir Charles’s body, and when he reached the toes, giving his hands a sudden shake, as if he had gathered a handful of the disease, and were throwing it away over the end of the sofa. At in-

tervals he confined himself to the baronet's toes, over which he executed a singular movement, as if he were slowly, and with extreme difficulty, drawing a heavy chain out of the affected member.

Fobbles, who had stood a little way behind, watching the long passes with a sceptical grin, no sooner saw this than an involuntary laugh, which he immediately smothered, and attempted, with much confusion, to change into a cough, started to his mouth. The professor stopped, and looked severely at him. The baronet lifted his head and looked severely at him: till poor Fobbles, turning red to the very roots of his hair, looked as if he would have felt it a relief had the floor beneath him given way, and let him tumble anywhere out of their sight.

"Fobbles," said Sir Charles, sternly, "go down stairs, sir; and, before returning to this room, learn to conduct yourself with propriety. Desire M'Lodle to attend here."

Fobbles was only too glad to escape from the glare of their indignant eyes; and shortly after he had disappeared, M'Lodle, the butler, came in and took his place near the sofa. M'Lodle was a grave, portly, clerical-looking man, with a solemnity of deportment that nothing could disturb. The mesmerist resumed his work in solemn silence, and before many minutes the baronet's eyes had turned up, the eyelids had gradually closed, his mouth dropped a little open, and he began to snore. The mesmerist continued his passes for a minute or two longer, and then, looking round at M'Lodle, softly approached him. The

butler, who had been watching his movements with awe, had evidently come to the conclusion that they belonged to some species of infernal incantation; for, on seeing the red-haired professor approach him, he fell back a pace, and waved his arm solemnly as if he were exorcising a demon. It turned out, however, that all the professor wanted was a basin of water and a towel for his hands. M'Lodde, considerably relieved, went away to give the order; and appeared, at the same time, to have diffused the intelligence down stairs that Sir Charles had been bewitched: for Jenny, the housemaid, who brought the articles required, came in with a look of awe mingled with curiosity, and was accompanied by Mrs. Caie, the housekeeper, who stood at the other end of the room, and scrutinized severely, first the red-haired professor, and then the prostrate baronet, who lay snoring, with his mouth wide open and his arm hanging outwards over the sofa. A red face, which probably belonged to the cook, also made its appearance at the door; and even Fobbles ventured to peep in and make furtive inspection of his snoring chief.

The professor dipped his warm hands in the basin, dried them with the towel, took up a newspaper, sat down in the arm-chair, and began to read, as if nothing at all unusual had occurred.

Mrs. Caie and Jenny, who had lingered to watch all this, retired with Fobbles to the hall.

"There's something no canny aboot that man," said Mrs. Caie, shaking her head, and speaking in a low voice.

"What was it he did to Sir Charles?" asked Jenny. Mrs. Caie looked to Fobbles for a reply.

"Got him on the sofa like a dissectin' corpus," said Fobbles, "and went on in this here style"—and Fobbles went through the movements of the mesmerist with great fidelity.

"Losh me!" exclaimed Jenny, who had watched the pantomime with a look of mingled wonder and awe.

"He said he wanted to throw him into a comet," said Fobbles.

"Throw him into a comet!" exclaimed Mrs. Caie, with a look of horror.

"A mesmeric comet," said Fobbles, with a nod.

"Eh my! did ye ever hear the like!" exclaimed Jenny.

"After all, that's nothing," said Fobbles with an air of superior knowledge. "I know them fellers. I've seen 'em in London. Electro-barometers we call 'em there. They puts a fellar into a comet, and make 'im tell you what you was adoin' this time last year: also what's agoing on at this 'ere moment in Australiar, Timbertoo, East Injies, Jerusalem, Jamaicar, &c.—and 'im never once out o' the chair."

"Even that," continued Fobbles, seeing the impression he had made, "ain't up to wot they puffawms in Calcutter. My brother Jim, as sails in the *Black and Wite Star*, see'd them sawbones in the Calcutter 'ospitable, with his hown eyes, send a young Hindoo Injine asleep with those motions"—and Fobbles jerked his thumb towards the room where the mes-

merist was—"and take and cut 'im up to get a tumult out of his right leg; and blow'd if the feller know'd anything about it till they had him all stitched up again, and wakened 'im with a red-hot iron. Fact. Jim saw it. Cholera-form is mere bagatelle beside it."

Mr. Caie's apprehensions were now thoroughly aroused. "I'll take care," she said, "that he doesna' try any witchery o' the kind with Sir Charles. It's no a thing for Christian folk to have anything ado wi'."

Mrs. Caie was as good as her word; for she went into the library, and sat there like a grim sentinel, till the baronet, after an hour and a half's sleep, was fairly awake again.

CHAPTER VI.

FOWLER MEETS WITH A DISAGREEABLE SURPRISE.

THE picnic party was, in the meantime, returning in high spirits from the Abbey. They had nearly reached the lodge at Dunvarlich when they espied a woman, with a child in her arms, standing at the roadside as if awaiting their approach. Fowler's eye was at once attracted to this figure, and as they drew nearer, and he saw the woman's features more distinctly, a look of something like horrified surprise came into his face, though he strove hard to keep his agitation from being observed. As they rapidly approached the spot where the woman stood, he drew rein a little, and he and Miss Montalvan fell behind. The carriage was no

sooner past than the woman stepped farther out upon the road, and stretched forth an arm as if to intercept the two riders. She was still young in years and handsome, but poorly clad and half-starved like. Her features were sharp, and looked all the more so from the way in which her hair was brushed back and twisted tightly behind.

"Excuse me, Evelyn, for a moment," said Fowler, with ill-concealed embarrassment, bending towards his fair companion, and almost whispering, "this is a poor insane woman whom I gave alms to the other week, and she has been pestering me ever since. I will rejoin you immediately."

Miss Montalvan had been scrutinizing the woman and her child. The face of the poor infant, naturally beautiful, was ghastly pale and thin, and though its head lay upon its mother's shoulder as if in sleep, its close-knit features were contracted as if in pain. Moreover, there was a something—a mysterious something—in its expression that struck Miss Montalvan, and seemed to connect itself with a something else (what it was she could not think) in her own mind. What could it be? There was surely a something familiar about that face. When Fowler asked her to ride on and he would rejoin her directly, she looked at him, looked at the child again, and seemed puzzled: but she cast the thing from her mind, nodded cheerfully, and touching her palfrey with her whip, cantered away after the carriage.

Fowler drew up, looked after her for a few seconds, and then turned, almost fiercely, upon the woman.

"Jane Everett! good gracious! what has brought you here?"

"You, Macdonald!" cried the woman passionately. "What else? I have followed you across the ocean, and found you at last."

"Come, Jane, don't speak like that," said Fowler uneasily, "speak as you used to speak, like a good girl."

She pointed to the child. Fowler glanced at it uneasily.

"Well, hang it," he said, "it can't be helped now. The mischief's done, and can't be undone."

She said nothing, but looked at him with a wild earnestness.

"Where are you staying?" asked Fowler.

"I reached Perth last night. I am staying with an old woman, a Mrs. Hislop, at the corner of Begg's Wynd."

A few questions more were put and answered.

"Well, well, Jane," Fowler said impatiently, "go back. I will see you there to-morrow evening. I can't wait here, you know. We shall arrange everything to-morrow. You mustn't remain hereabouts. You must go home again."

"Home!" exclaimed the woman bitterly; "there is no home for me in America now. Shall I go back to the father whose gray hairs I have covered with shame—to the mother whose heart I have broken—to the sisters who would turn their backs upon me—to the friends who would spurn me as a foul thing from their feet! Shall I go back to disgrace and

misery?—go back to see the desolation I have made? Never! never!” she cried vehemently; “I have no home or country now. I have come here to live with you or die.”

“Come, come, Jane. Don’t give way like that,” said Fowler nervously. “If you won’t go back I will do what I can for you in this country. But you can’t, you mustn’t, remain in Perth. You wouldn’t bring humiliation on me, I know. Would you, Jane?” The woman looked earnestly at him and her lip quivered. “I shall look after you, never fear,” resumed Fowler. “I will see and get you provided for somewhere south, comfortably.”

“Take me to your own house, Macdonald. Oh do,” the girl cried with passionate earnestness. “I will be your housekeeper—your servant—your slave—anything. But oh, for the love of God—for the sake of this little one—don’t cast me off, don’t, don’t!” She pled with piteous earnestness, holding up towards him her sickly, starved-like child.

“Well, well, we shall see,” said Fowler hurriedly. “We shall arrange to-morrow if it can be done. But don’t detain me now. Stop!” he added, drawing off his glove and thrusting his hand into his pocket, “the child looks sickly. Poor little soul! Here, Jane, take this”—he held out his purse to her—“don’t want for anything, yourself or it.”

She took the purse reluctantly—she looked as if she needed it, poor creature!—and as she took it she caught Fowler’s hand in a sudden paroxysm of affection and kissed it. Then she put the little white

face of the child to it and said, "Kiss papa's hand, Charlie." A tremor, half of horror, half of remorse, thrilled through Fowler's frame as he felt the little innocent's face upon his hand.

"Now, now," he said quickly. "Enough. Good-bye. To-morrow night."

He put spurs to his horse and dashed away.

"This is infernal," he muttered, in tones of the bitterest mortification. "Before Evelyn Montalvan too! Most unfortunate! What on earth is to be done? She must be got out of the way—she and the child—at once."

He reached the lodge-gate.

"There's been a young woman here twice, sir, asking after you," the porter said, as he opened the gate.

"Yes, yes,—begging," said Fowler. "We met her." And so passed in.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH AN ENGAGEMENT IS SUDDENLY RUPTURED.

NEXT day being Thursday, the young ladies, as was their weekly custom, set off early in the forenoon to one of the poorer quarters of Perth on their errands of mercy; and, as fate would have it, amongst the other houses into which they went, was the one at the corner of Begg's Wynd, where the old woman Hislop stayed. They found her in her little earthen-floored kitchen surrounded by several women—most of them old withered crones—nodding and whispering

to one another with sundry grimaces. They fell apart, and curtsied respectfully, as the young ladies entered; but when Mary, with her usual smile and cheerful tone, began to ask about the old woman's health, the toothless crone held up her palsied finger, and said, in a deferential whisper,

"Wheesht! ma leddy. There's a corp ben the hoose." As she spoke she glanced towards the door of an inner room.

The young ladies started.

"It's a young wumman and her wean that cam' here for a ludgin' on Monday night," said the crone in the same low voice. "The wean wis skin an' bane, naethin' mair, puir wee thing; and last nicht it took bad and de'ed. Och anee!"

"Och anee!" chimed in the other old women, shaking their palsied heads.

"She winna' hae it middled wi," continued the crone. "And there she's sittin' owr't, as like a corp as the deed wean itsel'. She winna' hae us in. She tel't us to let her and her wean alane till the nicht."

There was a pause.

"If ye widna' mind, my leddies," she resumed, "I wish ye'd gang in—ye that hae lair—and read her a bit oot o' the Buik, and speak to her a wee, and try an' waken her up, puir lass."

"She's cam' a' the way frae America," said one of the crones.

"She hes nae kith nor kin i' the kintra ava'," groaned another. "Och anee!"

"Och anee—och anee!" chimed in the rest.

After a few moments of anxious consultation the young ladies consented; the door was opened for them, and they went in. A woman, haggard and worn—despair fixed in her face, her hair disordered, her hands locked in one another—sat on the earthen floor, beside a rude pallet, on which there lay the body of a little child, with its eyes turned up and glazed, and its little attenuated arms bent stiffly across its breast. It was with a start that Miss Montalvan, the moment she cast her eyes upon the woman, recognized, in that haggard face and shrunken form, the same person that Fowler and she had encountered upon the road the day before. The woman, too, the moment she turned up her lack-lustre eyes, evidently recognized her visitor, for a scared look, with a flash in it of fearful hope that was even more terrible than despair, sprang into her face, and she rose hurriedly as if expecting to see Fowler behind. When she perceived that the two girls were alone, the wild light fell from her face, and she sank again upon the floor beside the body of her child.

The door was shut. For some moments Miss Montalvan and Mary stood silent, awed by the presence of death, and of a woe more fearful still. Then, moved to compassion by the dreary and woebegone look of the poor woman, they began, in voices low and trembling with emotion, to breathe into her ear some words of consolation.

The woman sat as though she heard them not. Her hands locked in one another—her eyes fixed with the same dull, vacant stare upon her dead child.

The sight was too much for Mary. Her voice became choked; and, creeping down beside the withered little corpse, she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears.

The woman was moved. She turned her eyes with a wild, sad, wondering earnestness, first on Mary, and then on Miss Montalvan, who had sunk down upon her knees beside her. She drew a deep breath, her lip trembled, and her eyes began to fill with tears.

"O look upward," said Miss Montalvan earnestly. "This is our Father's doing. It is meant for good. The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

"Why did he take away my child?" cried the woman in a sudden paroxysm of feeling. "It was the only one that was left to love me. Why did he take him away? He slept with me, he lay in my bosom, he smiled when I smiled, even in his hunger and pain; he clung to me when all others had turned their faces from me. O my little one—my child! my child!"

She looked at the little thing that lay before her cold and dead, pressed her hands upon her face, and sobbed convulsively.

"Do not mourn as those that have no hope," said Miss Montalvan tenderly. "The lambs are all safe. This little one has been taken away from us, but only to a brighter land, where it waits for you.

After a pause she said—"It put out its little hand: it took a taste of life, and found it bitter: and so it has turned its head back to the bosom of God again."

The woman sighed. Miss Montalvan took the Bible from Mary's hand, and turning over the leaves, began to read,—

“And they brought young children to him that he should put his hands upon them, and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

She turned over again and read—

“The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. Then thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The woman had relapsed into her old position; but when Miss Montalvan ceased, she looked up earnestly into her face. A new expression had come into her own, as if a thought were stirring in her mind that she desired, and yet hesitated, to express. She looked at the child again. Miss Montalvan's eyes instinctively followed hers, and once more she was struck with that indefinable something in the face of the child that had puzzled her the day before. The woman looked earnestly into her face again, and said, when their eyes met, “Miss, can I speak with you alone?”

“With me?—alone?”

“With you alone,” repeated the woman.

"If you have anything to say," replied Miss Montalvan, feeling a vague dread coming over her, "you need make no difference on Miss Macdonald's account. We are friends—sisters. We keep nothing from one another. You can speak now with perfect freedom."

"We must be alone," said the woman.

Mary rose, and, after a moment's consultation, left the room softly, and joined the old crones in the kitchen. Mrs. Hislop dusted a chair and set it for her in the chimney-corner.

"She wishes to say something to Miss Montalvan alone," said Mary, seeing that the old women were looking at her inquiringly. They all sat there waiting,—for the most part in silence; and by and by, Mary, to her astonishment, heard coming from within the sound of earnest, rapid whispering. What could the woman have to say to Evelyn? What could it be that made them whisper like that? There came a long pause. Then the door opened; and Miss Montalvan, with a deathly paleness on her face, came out.

"Let us go," she said, hurriedly.

She checked herself on the way to the door, and turning to the old woman of the house, said, "You had better not disturb her much. Send for Dr. Sutherland. Let him know that we were here. And take care of her, like a good woman—take every care of her. Give her whatever comfort she may need." She pressed some money into the old woman's hand, and, accompanied by Mary, left the house.

Mary was eager, of course, to know what the woman had said during the private interview; but Miss Mont-

alvan begged her not to ask or say anything more about it for the present. All the way home Miss Montalvan looked pale and excited. They reached Dunvarlich, and on their way up the long avenue they observed, thro' the trees, Fowler and the foreign gentlemen loitering on the esplanade in front of the Castle. The post had just arrived: and before the young ladies reached the esplanade, the Count and Mons. Lapetite went in to read their letters, while Fowler, with a cigar in his mouth, sauntered away to the summer-house, opening his newspaper as he went. Miss Montalvan accompanied Mary into the vestibule; and then, suddenly excusing herself, turned back and went to the summer-house. She entered. Fowler, sitting at his ease with one leg partially thrown over the little rustic table that stood in the centre, was folding back the paper with outstretched arms. Hearing the sound of her dress, he looked round; and, seeing Miss Montalvan, took the cigar from between his lips, and, with an exclamation of pleasure, rose to salute her. He saw the expression of her face and paused. Miss Montalvan looked at him fixedly for several moments. Her lips were firmly compressed, but there was a spasmodic twitch every other moment that betrayed her emotion.

"Mr. Macdonald," she said at length, "you remember our interview yesterday."

Fowler raised his eyebrows with an expression of astonishment.

"I made then," she continued more firmly, "a promise which must be retracted. I made it, not

knowing enough of him to whom it was given. I have seen Jane Everett to-day."

Miss Montalvan's dark, proud eyes were fixed upon his. He tried to brave their look, but the tell-tale blood rose hot into his brow.

"George Fowler!" she said with flashing eyes, "you have deceived me—doubly deceived me. Worse—ten thousand times worse than that—you have deceived—you have ruined that poor, friendless girl. Shame on you! burning shame!"

"She has been putting some nonsense into your head, I'll swear, about that child," said Fowler, trying to assume the calmness of innocence.

"Hush!" she said solemnly, "the child is dead!"

"What!" gasped Fowler, starting back and changing colour; "not dead!"

"Go, sir, if you have any pity in your heart. Go and speak to her. Comfort her if you can. Make such amends as may still be in your power."

"Yes, yes, I will," said Fowler earnestly, all other feelings giving way before his passionate love for the girl who stood before him. "I will provide for her. I will see her all right. On my honour, I will. And assure me that, if I do, your love will not change. This is a thing of the past. It is done, and cannot be undone. I regret it—deeply regret it—now that I have met you, Evelyn. What more can I say?"

"Answer me one question," said Miss Montalvan with quivering lip. "Did you lead her to believe that you would marry her?"

"Marry her!" exclaimed Fowler. "Marry that

girl! Why, she is the plebeian daughter of a poor, illiterate shopkeeper!"

"A plebeian!" Miss Montalvan repeated with withering scorn. "And pray, sir, what are you? What do you call yourself—you that have treated that poor girl as you have done?"

There was a pause.

"I ask you," resumed Miss Montalvan, "Did you, or did you not, promise her marriage?"

"No, Evelyn: before God—no!" cried Fowler.

"Then protect her, support her, watch over her: make every compensation you can for the foul wrong you have done her."

"I will, Evelyn; on my honour, I will," said Fowler fervently, for he saw a look in her face that alarmed him. "Only give me the assurance I ask; the assurance from your own lips that you will not take from me this fondest hope of all my life—that you will love me—that you will be mine, all the same."

He spoke with real, unaffected earnestness, and held out his hand. Miss Montalvan strove to control herself, but her lip quivered with intense emotion.

"If you do as you have promised to do," she replied—and her voice grew firm again—"I will be your friend—your sister, if you wish it: but your wife—never!"

When she had uttered these words, she drew herself proudly up, swept past him, and was gone.

Fowler stood for a time stupified. He loved that girl with a love which he had never felt before. His

spirit bowed before her in a sort of adoration. He felt as if, in a spirit so beautiful and noble, so divinely pure as hers, he could be satisfied. He felt as if, for her, he could afford to abandon his old courses, to lead a new life, to be another and a better man.

"Your wife—never!" There could be no mistaking the words: no escape from the firm emphasis that had struck that last utterance like a dagger into his heart. He stood for a time confounded. The change in Miss Montalvan was so sudden—so decisive—to him so incomprehensible. He could not appreciate her motives. Her code of morality was strangely different from his.

By and by a change came over his feelings. A sense of deeply wounded pride—the mortification of rejected love, rejected offers of penitence—took possession of him. Darker and fiercer thoughts began to surge up in his breast. His eyes kindled with a new fire. A look, half of fierce passion, half of vindictive scorn, almost blackened his visage. He crushed the paper which he still held in his hand.

"As I live," he muttered, with fierce emphasis, as he turned his now flashing eyes to the spot where the haughty beauty had disappeared. "She shall not thwart me. I will have her—I will," and Fowler swore a fearful oath, "have her or humble her. Ha, ha! my proud beauty, you do not know the spirit you have defied."

* * * * *

Two days after, Fowler was laughing and chatting with the baronet in his sitting-room, while the hands

of strangers were lowering under ground the little coffin that contained the body of his child. On the same night, huddled up in the corner of a third-class carriage, the woman who had left her hopes buried in that nameless grave, was on her way to the south—friendless and alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHICH LEAVES THE PROPER TREATMENT IN LESS
REPUTE THAN IT FOUND IT.

MONSIEUR LAPETITE, who professed himself greatly concerned about the baronet's illness, was a strong believer in the efficacy of the hydropathic treatment. He had himself derived great benefit from it, and was sure that it was just the thing for Sir Charles's gout.

“O, de Torkish bath!” he would exclaim, throwing up his little jewelled hands with enthusiasm, “it is voloptuous. It is ae—ae paradees! Ah, Monsieur de Baron, if you vood but experiment de Torkish bath!”

Sir Charles listened attentively, but with no thought as yet of following Monsieur's advice. Mesmerism, he flattered himself, was going to effect a complete cure. As yet, it had no doubt failed to do him any appreciable good; but then it had not received a fair trial. He must have patience. Rome, as Professor Wingwie always reminded him, was not built in a day. And of *that*, at least, there could be no doubt. Still, Sir

Charles would have liked to feel some little positive improvement. Sometimes he tried to persuade himself that he did; but his imagination was not equal to the task. Sleeplessness began to trouble him more than ever: and it is difficult for a man, however willing he may be, to convince himself that he is asleep when he is lying wide awake. Sir Charles with some petulance spoke of this last symptom to Professor Wingwie.

"Sleeplessness! Strange—very strange!" said the professor. "Let me see. Are you sure that you lie in the right position?"

Sir Charles looked at him inquiringly.

"I mean how—in what position—do you lie in bed? Do you lie with your head properly to the south?"

"My head to the south!" exclaimed the baronet. "I never thought of looking. You don't mean to say that it matters?"

"Matters a great deal, my dear sir," replied the professor gravely. "The law of mesmeric influence can no more be violated with impunity than the other laws of nature. Perhaps you were not aware, sir, that the mesmeric current, which helps to compose the nerves and induce sleep, flows due north."

No. Sir Charles was not aware of that. He was bound to confess, indeed, that he had never heard of a mesmeric current at all.

"You are familiar, however, with the polarity of the magnet. It is the same thing precisely. Yes, sir, the mesmeric current flows from the south. The consequence is, that people should sleep, when they can, with their heads in a southerly direction."

"Astonishing! I never heard of such a thing."

"Not the less true. And to persons of delicate nerves, like yourself, a truth, as you can understand, of very great importance."

The baronet looked abstractedly at the professor.

Suddenly he gave a little nod. "That's it—depend upon it, that's it. I'll bet a guinea, now, my head has been turned the wrong way. I was sure there was something wrong. I must see to this. Come with me, doctor, please. Here, Fobbles, push me to my bedroom."

They were speedily there, and Fobbles was despatched to Mrs. Caie for a compass.

"Now, let us see, where is the south?" said Sir Charles, looking round. "This room faces to the north-west, or nearly so. Well. North-west—south-west—south! As—I—live, that bed is turned the wrong way!"

The baronet sank back with the air of a martyr, and looked at the professor for several moments in silence.

"Upon my word!" he said at last, "this is enough to try the temper of a saint. Here have I been lying for seven years—seven years!—in this room, with my head in a wrong direction; and that fellow Sutherland never once mentioned it—never so much as hinted at it! This is really atrocious!"

"Why, you see, sir," said the mesmerist in an apologetic tone, "the faculty are rather slow to recognize—"

"Confound the faculty!" broke in the baronet, im-

patiently. "What's their business but to recognize?—What are they for, if they don't recognize—if they don't notice these things? It's enough to—"

Fobbles appeared at this moment with a compass, and the baronet checked himself. The compass was taken from Fobbles, laid carefully in the centre of the bed, and examined.

"Ah, there it is, you see," said the professor, with a dip of his finger towards the compass, "E. by N.E. I don't wonder that you couldn't sleep, with the mesmeric current impinging all night directly upon your side, instead of being allowed to flow from your head northward to your feet."

"I was sure there was something wrong," said the baronet indignantly. "Now, that Sutherland has been in this room five hundred times, if he has been once, and he never so much as asked for half-a-minute's use of a compass. Never. Well, I'm done with those doctors. That's one thing settled. Fobbles, call Mrs. Caie. We must have this rectified at once."

Fobbles disappeared, and presently returned with Mrs. Caie.

"Look here, Mrs. Caie," said the baronet. "This bed must be turned round. Put that compass on the floor to guide you, and turn the bed till you get its head to the south—in that direction, see. But look at the compass, and get it exact. Let that be done before night."

"But, deara me, Sir Chairles," said Mrs. Caie with a smile of superior knowledge, "that wad never do.

The bed maun stand on a line wi' the wan wall or wi' the ither."

"Why must it, madam?" asked Sir Charles impatiently.

"Why must it?" exclaimed Mrs. Caie, taken somewhat aback at being called upon to explain what seemed to her a thing self-evident, and too simple to be capable of explanation. "There's no ither way it can stand, Sir Chairles. A bed canna' stick oot thrawn."

"A bed will stand, Mrs. Caie, in any position in which it is placed," said the baronet testily. "And this bed, I repeat, must be placed due north and south. What have I to do with walls? I must sleep."

"Weel, weel, Sir Chairles," replied Mrs. Caie with an air of savage submission. "Of course it maun be done. But it's the first time I ever heard o' sic a thing."

"Let it be done before night," said Sir Charles; and Fobbles wheeled him away, followed by the professor.

The required alteration was made that afternoon, to Mrs. Caie's irrepressible disgust.

"There!" she said, when it was done, appealing to Jenny and M'Lodde, who had been assisting her. "Wha ever saw a bed like that? It's enough to send a woman clean gyte. Stickin' oot there in no direction at a'. I'm rale ang-er't at him."

"It's a' owin' to that queer man o' a mesmerisk," said Jenny.

"Ach, the big hairy lout!" exclaimed Mrs. Caie indignantly, her epithet referring to the bushy red

whiskers of the professor; "I canna bear the look o' him. His mooth's like a rat's nest. It's amazin' to me hoo ony Christian man, let alone a Chinnyman or a bleck, would go aboot amang decent folk wi' a great muckle tahgert o' a beard lik' yon. The very mavises might big their nests intil't and him no' ken. Faugh!"

M'Lodle (who had no whiskers) expressed his entire concurrence with these views.

"But oh, I'm ang-er't at Sir Chairles," cried Mrs. Caie, after another indignant glance at the bed, "that he's such a gomeril as to listen to a' that yon big eediwut says. What does *he* ken about beds?—and here's me been acquaint wi' furnitur' a' my days. I kent frae the first that yon man was a quack. Weel, weel, we'll see what comes o't."

It must be confessed that Mrs. Caie, much as she felt for her master, secretly rejoiced that Sir Charles slept no better after this change in the position of his bed than he had done before; if anything, indeed, rather worse. Also, that the young ladies were of opinion that the mesmeric treatment was doing him no good whatever. Sir Charles was evidently coming round to the same opinion himself, and began to speak of the professor and his treatment in much less laudatory terms than at first. He also began to listen with more of personal interest to Mons. Lapetite's rhapsodies about hydropathy. That vivacious little gentleman became proportionately more eloquent.

"O de Torkish bath!" he said, "It vorks miracles. Now, I will tell you a true history. There

vos a man all full veed rheumatism, that vos imported in von day at de Vorsley bath, ven I was there—so steef he not could move ae leetle fingair; and he not been two hour in de Torkish bath ven he go jomp about like ae leetle monkey. Ah, Mons. le Baron! if you vood but experiment de Torkish bath!”

Sir Charles really began to think of doing so at last. Suppose he should, where would Mons. Lapetite recommend him to go? “Vell, there vos no choica in dees contry,” Monsieur said; “but de Vorsley Cold Vatair Institute he could ver moch recommend. Monsieur Jean de la Douche vos the directeur—a ver propair gentleman.”

Monsieur was sure this was the thing for Sir Charles. He told him so again and again. When other topics of conversation failed, he returned to this one with fresh enthusiasm. The very last thing he said to the baronet, when he and Count Casco Wiski were at last taking their leave, and Monsieur had expressed their gratitude in a perfect torrent of broken English, was the old story over again. “Ah, Mons. le Baron, do not forget de Cold Vatair Institute!”

CHAPTER IX.

THE ENGINE-DRIVER AND HIS DAUGHTER.

A GREAT stir was produced in the Castle the second evening after the departure of the foreign guests, when the boy who was sent to Perth every evening for any

letters that might come by the afternoon train from the south, brought a letter from Gilbert, with the exciting intelligence that the 17th Lancers had been ordered out to the Crimea, and would embark that day four weeks. Sir Charles read the letter aloud at the dinner-table, with a strange mingling of agitation and pride. A flush kindled on Miss Montalvan's face. There was a martial spirit in the girl. She was evidently thinking of the brilliant side of war—the streaming banners, the drums, the forests of glittering sabres, Gilbert charging at the head of his troop, and coming back flushed with victory. The motto of his regiment was “DEATH OR GLORY;” it was the glory that she thought of. Not so, Mary. Her countenance fell when she heard the news. She thought of those that would go into battle strong, gallant men, and be left on the field mere heaps of flesh and bone. Of the many that were likely to fall, what if Gilbert should be one! Fowler had no such thought. He was full of war. He rose up, filled his glass, and drank to Gilbert Macdonald and the allied armies.

In the servants' hall the excitement was equally great. Fobbles and M'Lodde had carried down the news by instalments; and as soon as dinner was over, and the servants were at leisure, they assembled to hold high conclave and discuss the exciting intelligence over a dish of tea. The interest and importance of the occasion was increased by the presence of Jenny's father, Campbell, a short, stout man with a cast in his eye, who was an engine-driver on the Scottish Central Railway. Also by the presence of

Jenny's sweetheart, a fine, stalwart, frank-faced fellow of the name of Blacklock, who was fireman on Campbell's engine.

The circumstances under which Jenny had given her heart to Blacklock had been unusual enough to deserve notice. Blacklock had often met her at her father's house, and had made love to her. Jenny liked him very well, but was coquettish, and had set her heart on having a soldier, or else a man-of-war's man, such as she had once seen at Dundee, with duck trousers, broad blue collar, and glazed hat, with his ship's name in gold letters on the ribbon. So poor Blacklock began to despair. One night, as he was returning home at a late hour, he heard cries as of a female in distress coming from a neighbouring street, and went to see what the matter was. It turned out afterwards that Campbell had been spending the evening in a public-house. Jenny had got in that night from Dunvarlich to see her parents, and, finding from her distressed mother how matters stood, she went away to the public-house to fetch her father home. She got him away from his boon-companions, but he was so drunk that she had to help him home along the dark and vacant streets. Two or three young fellows, who had been drinking at the same tavern, bent on a lark and attracted by Jenny's pretty face, followed her till they came to a lane, when they made up, and began first to joke, and then to use liberties with her. One put his arm round her and pulled her away from her father, who fell and lay at the road-side half stupified.

Jenny screamed for help, but the fellow who had hold of her tried to stifle her cries. In attempting this, the two fell together. The man clasped her in his arms, and would not let her up. It was at this moment that Blacklock, attracted by the cries he had heard, reached the spot. Not seeing distinctly what was going on, he said, "What's the row?" Poor Jenny, though the man's hand was on her mouth, contrived to twist aside her head and gasp—"O William, help, help!" William lost very little time in doing that, and doing it with a vengeance. Springing forward and dashing his clenched fist in the face of the man who had come forward to stop him, he knocked the fellow back against the wall. Bending down, he next seized the man who had hold of Jenny, and hurled him out upon the road. By this time other steps were heard approaching; and the scoundrels took to their heels. Jenny, who thought she had escaped from more serious outrage than her assailants probably meditated, was unbounded in her gratitude to her deliverer; and from that night her heart was his.

So many misfortunes had come upon Campbell in consequence of his occasional indulgence in drink, that his poor wife and Jenny had begged him, time and again, to take the pledge, but in vain. It was therefore a joyful surprise to Jenny when, on this memorable evening at the Castle, her father said,—

"Well, Jenny, my lass, I've jined the teetotal."

"Do you mean it, father?"

"I do that. I've signed a paper for promisin' no to taste another drop for a twelmonth."

Jenny, in a transport of joy, threw herself into her father's arms. Those only who know what drunkenness means in the home of a working-man—the darkness and desolation that it brings, the scenes of heart-breaking neglect and drunken violence, the nights of weary watching, the days of remorse and gloom—only those who have seen all this can understand what a flood of sunshine, what a spring-like exultation and joy, the taking of the temperance pledge can bring into a poor man's home. Jenny turned her bright face towards Blacklock.

"Was it you that got him to do it, William?" she asked,

Blacklock shook his head.

"But you'll do it now yourself too, won't you?" she said coaxingly.

"If I do, will you give me what you've given your father?" asked Blacklock smiling.

"Ha! there's your chance," cried the others.

Jenny laughed, and looking archly at her sweetheart, nodded.

"Then I will, Jenny. There's my hand on it," cried Blacklock.

She took his hand, holding back herself with tempting coyness,

Blacklock knew what he was about, and drawing her to him, amidst great laughter and applause, kissed her, in spite of all her little struggles and screams.

"Hear, hear!" cried Fobbles spiritedly, and nudged a tidy little servant-girl, towards whom Fobbles had evidently a weak side. "Hear, hear! I like that.

If this is wot's meant by the temperance cause, I'll join too. What do you say, Lizzie? It's a noble institution, ain't it?"

"Get away with you," said the little maid.

"Ah! you see, Jenny, she ain't like you," sighed Fobbles. "She won't confess her feelinks. It's just the young 'ooman over again in Shakspeare's famous tragedy,—

'She never told her love:
But let concealment like a wonderful bird
Feed on her damaged cheek,'

—eh, Lizzie?"

"Get away," said the little maid tossing her head. "Henry Fobbles! get away, I hate you."

"You see how it is," said Fobbles looking round. "It's there, but she won't confess. She draws the curtins of her heart close, to 'ide the beloved name of 'Enery Fobbles. Ah! if there wos only a winder in that lily-wite buzzum, how we would see the burnin' mounting of her heart a-spouting upward the red-hot lather of love!"

"But you havena' told us who got you to sign the pledge," said Jenny to her father. "Was it Mr. Rintoul?"

(Mr. Rintoul, we may remark, had been Campbell's minister.)

"Mr. Rintoul? No likely. He did come up to the hoose one day when he heard I was aff the stracht, and said this was very wrong and sinfu', and he wad advise me to gie up drinking a'thegither. Ha,

ha! a fine man Mr. Rintoul, to tell me that, when I've heard o' himsel' drinkin' mair at wan sittin' than ever I've ta'en in twa. Didna' him and his session suspend me only fowr weeks sin' and did'en he go the very next night to the Charity Dinner and drink nine tumblers o' whisky-toddy, no to speak o' other things. Mr. Blunter tell't me, and he saw it with his own eyes. A fine man him to take me to task, and suspend me, for drinkin' no half as much as himsel'! He winna' suspend Pipsley o' the Ludge, I'll wager, though Pipsley had to be lifted oot to the carriage that nicht. Pipsley puts his pound-not' in the plate on collection days, and keeps owre guid wine in his hoose to be suspended. Na, na: when they want cases to make warnin' examples o', they maun tak' them frae amang the poor folk. They canna' afford to mak' moral examples o' men that put siller in the plate every Sabbath, and a pound-not' on extra collection days! Na, na! that wouldna' pay."

"But, I say, you havena' told us yet who got you to join," said Jenny with a laugh.

"Tak' time, Jenny. I'm coming to that, bit by bit, like a parliamentary," returned Campbell. "I tell't you I wis' suspended. Weel, twa'r three days efter, up cam twa o' the elders, and sez they,—'You're goin' to express penitence, Mr. Campbell, we hope, in order that ye may be received back into full communion.' 'What for should I express penitence,' sez I, 'to a man that drinks ten times mair i' the year than I do?' For I confess I wis ang'ert. 'No,' sez I, 'if I'm bad, he's waur.'

"So I gi'ed up goin' to Mr. Rintoul's," continued Campbell, "and went to a meetin'-hoose where there was a nice, airnest kin' o' man, a Mr. Mitchell, preachin' and getherin' a congregation—the gentleman I tell't ye aboot when I was here afore, ye mind. Weel, one day, when I wis a wee the worse o' liquor, Mr. Mitchell meets me, and tak's me hame, and never says a hard word to me so much. But next day he comes up, and sez he, 'Mr. Campbell, I wish I could get you to give up drinkin'.' Well, I could see your mither, Jenny, lookin' that airnest at me, wi' something like tears in her een. 'I dar'say it doesna' do me much good, sir,' sez I. 'Then why don't you stop it?' sez he. 'What for don't my betters?' sez I. 'They tak' their wine oot o' silver joogs, an' I tak' my gill oot o' a gless and a pewter stowp. That's the difference. I wad prefer the wine and the silver joog mysel', if I could afford it. But you see I canna'.' Mr. Mitchell thought a wee, and then, 'Mr. Campbell,' sez he, 'I like a glass o' wine very well myself at a time.' 'Then I'm very sorry I havena' one to offer you,' sez I. 'Thank you, that's not what I mean,' sez he. 'I'll tell you what, Campbell,' sez he. 'I'll make a bargain with you. I'll give up every kind o' drink, if you will. We'll try it for a year, to begin with. And at the end of the year, if we find ourselves the worse for wanting it, we'll resume its use; but if we find ourselves better wanting it, we'll join the Temperance Society.' Weel, what could I do? Here wis a reverend gentleman, that likit his glass as weel maybe as I likit mine, willin' to gie it up for my sake.

'Here's my hand on't,' sez I, 'and God helpin' me, no anither drop o' drink 'ill cross my lips, at least till the year's oot.' So we signed the paper, and he's got wan copy, and I've got anither."

There was a universal murmur of applause.

"Ay, that's the man for me," said Campbell emphatically. "No the man that sez to you, 'Go and don't taste,' while he stops himsel' and drinks. But the man that sez, 'Come, my freend, gie's yer hand, and we'll gang thegither!'"

"So there it is, Jenny," said Campbell cheerfully. "And your mither's as gled aboot it as if she had got a thoosand pounds in her hand."

CHAPTER X.

GIVES A CUE TO THOSE WHO LOOK FOR IT, AND SHOWS
THAT THE BARONET CONTEMPLATES A CHANGE.

THE conversation now returned to Gilbert and the Crimean war. On this subject the discussion became very animated and profound. Campbell and M'Lodle were both able to speak on this question with some authority. They had never been in the army exactly, but Campbell's father had, in George the Third's time, been a volunteer, while M'Lodle, in days when he was thinner and more impulsive, had once himself been on the very point of enlisting in a Highland regiment. He and Campbell accordingly discussed the prospects of the war with great profundity and

concern, much to the admiration of the audience, and to the bewilderment of everybody except Fobbles. That young gentleman was himself no mean authority on military matters, having seen the Guards walk in the parks in London, and having witnessed the performance of innumerable battles, rencontres, and other warlike performances, upon the metropolitan stage. Some of these, by way of interlude, Fobbles gave pantomimic illustrations of to the admiring spectators. He also, by special request, and as a thing appropriate to this occasion, recited "The Battle of Hohenlinden" (a favourite piece of his), in which performance—being fond of vehement gesticulation—he quickly wrought himself up to a terrific pitch of poetic fury and perspiration. Unfortunately, however, at the very moment when, with his arms uplifted, his eyes glittering, and his little legs planted far apart, he was calling frantically upon Munich to wave her banners, wave, and charge with all her chivalry, Fowler's bell rang, and Fobbles had suddenly to collapse, wipe his perspiring face with the jack-towel, and trot upstairs to see what was wanted.

"Mr. Fowler is related to Sir Charles Macdonald, is he no?" asked Campbell.

"Yes: he's his half-brother. Old Sir Gilbert's son by his second wife."

"He looks very young to be a half-brother," Campbell said with some surprise.

"There's not so much difference as you would think," said Mrs. Glowb, the cook, who had been in the family all her life almost. "Sir Charles's wake-

ness and trouble mak' him look older than he is. There's no twenty years between the two."

"I've heard there was something queer about his father's first marriage," said Campbell.

The cook nodded. "That was wi' Mrs. Montgomery."

"Ay, Mrs. Montgomery. She merried him afore her ain man was mony months dead, I've heard say."

"Ah, but that wasna the worst o't. She merried him afore she was sure that her ain man was dead at a'!"

"Ay, was that the fac'?"

"That was the fac'. She merried Sir Gilbert no seven months efter hearing o' the loss o' Captain Montgomery's ship."

"But the captain was drowned," said M'Lodde.

"Ay, but she couldna be sure o't then. Naebody had seen his corp. Twa'r three o' the men turned up in different places. Hoo could she ken but the captain might turn up next?"

"A queer ne'er-do-weel kin' o' man he was," added Mrs. Glowb. "His picture's in yon album upstairs. You might bring it doon, Lizzie, and let Mr. Cammel see it. Ask Mrs. Caie; it's in her room."

Lizzie went away on her errand, and returned following Mrs. Caie herself, who, hearing that Campbell and Blacklock were there, had come down to see them, and show them the curiosities of the album herself.

She sat down at the table, and after a little preliminary talking, put on her spectacles, opened the album—the others gathering round.

"Here's Captain Montgomery," she said, when she had turned over several leaves. "And there's a letter o' his."

"Hech me!" exclaimed Blacklock with a laugh, "what queer writin'!"

"Ay, Wully," said Campbell, "ye're no a great hand at the pen yoursel'; but I think you could mak' a better job o't than that."

"You see, it's more fashionable," suggested Mrs. Caie, "to write so that hardly onybody can mak' it oot; but the letter itsel' is rale interestin'. It's about a fecht the captain hed wi' pirates. I have heard Miss Montalvan read it; but I canna mak' head nor tail o't mysel'; so we'll ha'e to let it be."

The others stared at the document with much interest, and then looked over a number of other curiosities.

"Ah, look there," said M'Lodde admiringly, when another leaf had been turned, "there's Captain Gilbert in his regimentals. Dr. Sutherland did that wan night with a lead pencil, every bit of it. Isn't it like?"

"Heigho! I wish the doctor was back," said Mrs. Caie. "I'm jist sick o' that muckle red-whiskered chiel wi' his fingers and his falderals. He's no fit to haud a cannell till oor ain doctor."

"Ha, well, *he* won't be here long," said Fobbles mysteriously.

Mrs. Caie and M'Lodde looked at him.

"Did you hear onything to that effect?"

Fobbles nodded. "It's private in the meantime," he added. "But I was in the hall the other day just after Dr. Wingwie had gone out, when I hears"—

Fobbles did not think it necessary to explain that he had been listening at the half-open door—"when I hears the guv'ner say, in a subjew'd voice, 'That fellow,' ses he, 'is a downright humbug, if ever there was one.' The ladies they laugh, and begin to say something. 'Well,' says the guv'ner, 'all I've got to say is, I'm done with him. I want no more of his mummies.'"

This intelligence was received with great satisfaction. "Now, then, we'll ha'e oor ain doctor back again," said Mrs. Caie, with an air of relief.

Fobbles shook his head. "Not yet, Mrs. Caie, I'm afraid. The guv'ner says he means to try hydrophobia now."

"To what!"

"To try hydrophobia," repeated Fobbles mildly.

"Hydrophobia!" exclaimed Mrs. Caie, looking aghast at Fobbles over the tops of her spectacles.

"Yes. Said so last week at any rate. You remember that day when the guv'ner's sister was here from Hedinburg—Mrs. what-d'ye-call-her"—

"Mrs. Fayding."

Fobbles nodded.

"Well; she was advisin' the guv'ner to try something she called hommy-apothecary, which she carries about in a small box in her ridicule. 'Hommy-apothecary,' sez she, 'has been a blessing and boon to my family.' Which it has, judging by her own prescription. She assured the guv'ner it had saved herself, her 'usband, five childring, two female cousins, and others too numerous to mention. 'Well, Georgina,' says the guv'ner, 'I'll think of it. But,' sez he, 'after

what Mossoo Lappet has told me, I mean first to try hydrophobia."

"Losh me!" exclaimed the cook, "that's the thing dogs tak' when they gae mad."

There was a solemn pause.

"I've heard o' people taking that," said Blacklock. "Morrison—ye ken Morrison at the Polmont Junction, Mr. Cammel—well, Morrison told me about a man that took hyderaphobia efter he was bit wi' a mad dog, and he went barkin' and jumpin' about, snap-pin' wi' his teeth. The doctors had to smother him at last atween twa feather beds."

"Aa, mercy!" ejaculated Mrs. Glowb. The women stared at each other. The little servant-maid sat listening with open-eyed horror.

"Sir Charles would never think o' trying that?" said M'Lodle with an air of concern.

"Deed I'm no so sure," said Mrs. Caie, shaking her head. "A man that would try gettin' his bed pulled oot across the floor, and settin' its head to the sooth wi' a compass, like's he was steerin' a ship, would try onything."

"But a thing that makes people mad," protested M'Lodle.

"They wud need to dra' it mild, if they try it," said Campbell.

"Waccination, you know," said Fobbles suggestively. "They'll do it on the principle of waccination. They'll scratch an illimitesimal quantity into his shoulder; that'll be all, I expect. They've got a hinstitution for it somewhere. Worsley, I think &

is. Mossoo Lappetit knows the man wot keeps it—another Mossoo—Della Deuce, I think he called him.”

A sudden light broke on M'Lodde's face. “Hoots, man,” he cried indignantly, making a push at Fobbles. “Hydrophobia! What are you thinkin' of? It's the cold watter cure. I heard them speakin' about Della Deuce only yesterday. It's the cold watter cure. What put hydrophobia into your head, man, frightenin' folk.”

“I only know the guv'ner *said* hydrophobia,” retorted Fobbles.

“Hydroparty, you'll mean,” cried Mrs. Caie, with an air of relief. “Now I mind. I've heard them give that name to the watter cure.”

“Ah well!” said Fobbles, who now recollected some circumstances favourable to this supposition; “we needn't quarrel about a name. It's all the same in the Greek. As says the Shakspering poet—

‘What's in a name? A nose
By any other name would smell a sweetie.’”

And Fobbles, with a majestic wave of the hand, closed the discussion, and passed on to another subject.

CHAPTER XI.

SEES GILBERT HOME, AND DESCRIBES A RATHER
SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE.

ON the appointed day Gilbert arrived, and the flag was hoisted on the Castle tower. During the few

days he spent at home the Castle was thronged with visitors. There was company almost every day at dinner; and M'Lodle, in all the glory of his high estate, stood behind the baronet's chair, surveying the glittering company with the dignity of an emperor. The piper, too, as was the custom on such occasions, came in before the ladies withdrew, and marched proudly round the table behind the company, playing a lively air (for sensitive ears rather lively). The piper's dignity swelled with the size of the company. The sight of Gilbert especially seemed to inspire him with military ardour; and he passed along, round and round the room, with cheeks distended and tartans sweeping, as if he were leading the clans to battle. Mary, who had to put her hands to her ears every time he passed behind her chair, declared her conviction that if Donald could be got near enough to the Russians with his pipes, he would soon clear the Crimea of them.

It was only at night, after the company was gone, that the family could get Gilbert to themselves. Sweetest hours of all were those spent in Gilbert's sitting-room when the girls stole in to bid him good night, and generally ended by getting the door shut and Gilbert beguiled into a chair before the fire, where they themselves would creep down one on each side of him on the rug, and get into long talks. Ah! those glorious hours of night when the heart is full and the voice is free! Sometimes Gilbert would sit with an arm round each fair neck; and often, at such times, his eyes would dwell with a deep and thoughtful in-

terest on the exquisite Grecian face of Miss Montalvan as it glowed and darkened in the light of the fire.

But amongst the friends who came to see him, Gilbert sadly missed the face of Dr. Sutherland. He was excessively annoyed at the step his father had taken. He consulted with the girls; he spoke to his father again and again; he reasoned, explained, remonstrated, but all in vain. Sir Charles's temper had not been improved by a fresh attack of gout which kept him for the most part a prisoner in his own room. He was obstinate and dogged.

"Don't let me hear another word, sir, on this matter," he said angrily, when Gilbert broached the subject for the third or fourth time. "I know what I am about. I tell you, once for all, the fellow insulted me. He had the audacity—the impudence—to tell me that I drank too much! Ordered me, sir, to give up my glass of wine, when he knows as well as I do that I need it—that my constitution could not stand without it. I have feelings, sir, as well as you; and I tell you, sir, once for all, that that man shall never enter this house while I am master of it. There. Let me hear no more of it. If you want to fraternize with him, wait till I am dead, sir, and then bring him here to insult my memory!"

Gilbert saw that there was no use remonstrating. The baronet's mind was weakened by illness—his feelings exasperated by pain. Expostulation only incensed him, and made him worse. So Gilbert said no more, but took the first opportunity that offered itself to go to Dr. Sutherland's house, tell him how matters

stood, and assure him of his own undiminished attachment.

"And my father," he said, "when his health improves and he comes to think over this affair, will see the injustice he has done you, and will make ample amends. He has a generous heart, Sutherland; but just now, as you know, he is not quite himself. So don't judge him harshly. We shall see all right by and by."

Gilbert told the doctor about the mesmeric treatment, and stated that his father was giving it up. "My friend Lapetite," he added, "whom you would meet at the Castle, has put hydropathy into his head now. I never saw him more sanguine about anything. He thinks he has got his hand upon the right thing at last. At any rate, he is resolved on giving it a trial."

"Well, I am not sorry for that," said the doctor.

"Will it do him any good, do you think?"

"I think it may. And, at any rate, his diet will be regulated if he stays in the establishment. But as for a permanent cure,"—

The doctor shook his head.

"You still think, then, that it is the wine he drinks that harms him?"

"I am satisfied of that—perfectly satisfied. I wish, Gilbert, you could persuade him to give it up."

Gilbert shook his head despondingly, but promised that he would try.

And so, with mutual assurances of affection and respect, the two friends wrung each other's hands and parted.

Hitherto the doctor, knowing with what pride and affection the baronet regarded his son, had cherished the hope that Gilbert would succeed in bringing about a reconciliation. This hope was now at an end. The heaviest element of his disappointment lay in his separation from the sweet, kindred spirit, whose eyes he used to see kindling with a warmer light at his approach. He had come, almost unconsciously, to connect all his prospects of future happiness with Mary: and now, that he should have no opportunities of seeing her, he was desirous to ascertain, if possible, whether he was to labour on in hope or not. Accordingly, he wrote a long letter, the contents of which the reader may be left to conjecture. Two days afterwards, there came to him by post a little note sealed with blue wax. What secret assurance that precious little messenger brought I can only guess; but the cloud passed away from the doctor's brow, his old heartiness came back, and his work became a joy once more. When he looked into his bank-book now, he marked with a new and livelier pleasure the steady increase of his dividends. At Dunvarlich a like change became visible at least to one. Miss Montalvan observed that a smile more radiant than ever began to shine on Mary's face. No doubt she guessed the reason.

An incident occurred one day while Gilbert was at home which must not be omitted. Miss Montalvan had got a beautiful little photograph of herself taken, to send to her erratic aunt, then sojourning at Dieppe. The artist had taken great pains to do full justice to

so handsome and beautiful a girl. He was what every photographer ought to be—an artist, able to see in what attitude, and with what expression, the character of his subject could be best portrayed. His photograph of Miss Montalvan was admirable—bringing out the exquisite beauty of her face and something of the glory of her eye. She had been looking at Mary while the likeness was being taken, and this had brought into her features an expression of sweetness that added an indescribable charm to the fascinating hauteur that naturally belonged to her.

This likeness had been laid aside till such time as the parcel might be ready for despatch: but one day, on search being made for it, to show it to a bevy of young ladies who had come to spend the afternoon, it was nowhere to be found. Miss Montalvan at once suspected that Fowler had got his hands on it: but her natural delicacy and pride kept her from expressing her suspicion.

“Never mind it,” she said to Mary, after every drawer had been searched in vain. “It will turn up some time when we are not looking for it.”

And so indeed it did; for the very day after, when Mary happened casually to open the very drawer in which she had commenced the search the day before, there it was as if it had never been touched. Mary was surprised for the moment: but did not think it worth her while to make any inquiry.

It happened that Gilbert went that evening along with Fowler to spend the night with Elmsley of Balvane, whose son, now an officer in the 33rd Regiment,

had been a school-fellow of his own. Returning to Dunvarlich next forenoon, he went into the library where his father sat encased in flannel, reading the papers. Gilbert was sitting down to open the letters that were waiting for him on the table when his father looked up again, and said, "O, there's a little box on the mantel-piece for you, Gilbert. A locket apparently. I didn't notice it was for you till I had opened it. No harm, I hope."

"None at all—none at all," said Gilbert: but the flush that coloured his cheek for a moment, and the hasty way in which he put the box into his pocket, rather belied his words.

"I couldn't get the thing opened," said the baronet. "I thought, having gone so far, there could be no harm in going a little further, and seeing whether you had a lock of hair, or anything of that sort in it. In for a penny, in for a pound, you know. But I couldn't get it opened."

"It's of no consequence," said Gilbert with apparent carelessness, and changed the subject.

"I hear you have made up your mind to start for London this week," he said.

"Yes; the sooner the better now. We were arranging matters this morning at breakfast. Mary goes with me on Wednesday. You are to follow so soon as you get your preparations completed; and when you have sailed, if I am not well enough to return, Fowler is to bring Miss Montalvan to us early the week after, on his way to Hampshire. I am in hopes that a day or two at the baths will do me a

world of good, and enable me to go and see you fairly off, my boy."

CHAPTER XII.

FORESHADOWINGS OF DANGER—FOWLER HATCHES HIS PLOT.

No difference sufficiently marked to excite anybody's attention, had taken place in Fowler's demeanour or looks. If his merriment occasionally seemed a little artificial, or his brow occasionally darker than it was wont to be, no one thought anything of it—Fowler having been at all times a man of variable mood. But in his own mind he had been brooding with bitter mortification over the rupture of his engagement with Miss Montalvan. He could not bear the thought of losing her. The beauty, the spirit, the exquisite delicacy of the girl, had enthralled him: he never thought of how he might escape from her fascination, it was delicious to him even while it was the source of his torment. His only thought was how to make her his. But—"Your wife, never!" Those words still rang in his ears, inexorable like the decree of Fate. He saw them repeated morning, noon, and night in the proud glance with which she could meet his eye, and the lofty self-control which made her careless either to seek or to shun his presence. "Your wife—never!" the higher hope was crushed; and Fowler's love was changing into a passion less pure.

Fowler liked to think that he had been wronged. Bad men are always fond of good pretexts. The more that Fowler's dark thoughts began to shape themselves into a purpose, the more he stayed himself on the conviction that Miss Montalvan had treated him with injustice and cruelty. No doubt his own treatment of the poor Baltimore girl, whom he had first ruined, and then abandoned, was bad; undoubtedly bad; he would admit that; and he could so far understand how, in the eye of a pure and high-principled girl like Miss Montalvan, it might seem a very heinous offence. But then it was done before he had met her; and now it was irrevocable. He had expressed his penitence—a thing his proud and imperious spirit would have scorned to do to any other human being. He had sent the girl to England, and made, as he considered, comfortable provision for her. Was this not enough? Was a sin that was past and repented of, to be set up now as an insuperable—an eternal barrier between him and happiness? It was unfair. It was unmerciful. Miss Montalvan had acted in this matter from a false sense of delicacy and pride. The mistake was hers; and if the consequences recoiled upon her own head, she had herself to blame. Well then, what was to be done? That was the question now. Fowler had never been very scrupulous as to the means he adopted for the accomplishment of his ends; but, in the present case, believing his end to be a righteous one—believing, at any rate, that he had been wronged, he was resolved, determined, that nothing should stand in his way. She had no right, he contended, to kindle and fan this

passion within him, to the extent even of promising to become his wife, and then to draw back. In the darkness and solitude of night Fowler turned these thoughts over in his mind. Every passion was inflamed. Nothing should stand in the way. Character, fortune, life itself—he would risk them all rather than be baffled. By fair means or by foul, he would have that girl.

All this time he was on the watch. He now saw in the arrangements that were being made for the removal of the family to England, a good chance of effecting his purpose: and he had succeeded, indirectly and most adroitly, in modifying these arrangements so as best to suit his plans. His first care was, to see that he and Miss Montalvan were left behind, alone, after the others were gone. In this, as we have seen, he was successful. He prepared his further plans with the utmost caution and secrecy. The young ladies' rooms were on the second floor of the principal wing of the Castle, opening from a long corridor. Fowler had secretly visited this part of the Castle and ascertained who slept there. He found that with the exception of the young ladies' rooms, no others in the gallery were regularly occupied, except one at the extreme end, where two of the house-maids slept. He had also taken impressions of the keys in wax, and made a journey one day to Dundee to provide himself with similar keys. He might have got them easily in Perth, but he thought it best to run no risk.

"I will have her. By fair means or by foul, I will have her," he muttered with an oath, as he paced his

room on the night before Sir Charles was to leave for England. You might have seen by the flames that kindled in Fowler's eye, that there was no counterfeit, no bravado. He stood there, a man prepared, determined, to carry out his purpose regardless of the consequences. And so the plot was hatched.

Wednesday came. Sir Charles and Mary, escorted by Miss Montalvan and Fowler, drove to the station. On the rumble behind sat Jenny, who was accompanying Mary as lady's-maid, and who was full of delight at the thought of seeing England. All she wished now was that William might be at the station, to see her in her beautiful new bonnet. The travellers were soon comfortably ensconced in a first-class carriage. The bell rang.

"Good-bye. Write and tell us how you are getting on."

"Good-bye."

There was a parting shower of words and smiles; and the train moved away. Mary's face was close to the window. Fowler again took off his hat and bowed gallantly. Mary nodded and smiled. What would she have done had she but known the dark purpose that lurked behind that smile.

Friday came. The appointed hour found Gilbert seated in the same train. Fowler, Miss Montalvan and the elderly Miss Pipsleys of Pipsley Hall (who had come to keep Miss Montalvan company during the interval) were standing by the open carriage door, waiting to see him off. Fowler was in good spirits, and kept up a desultory conversation, sometimes with

Gilbert, sometimes with the ladies, till the train should start. Miss Montalvan stood beside him, quieter than usual, and with a sadder expression in her eyes. In spite of her determination to bear up and look cheerful, for Gilbert's sake, the thought was evidently forcing itself upon her mind that this might be the last time she would ever see that familiar face, the picture to her of everything that was steadfast in love, and noble in thought and action. As she gazed upon him now she thought, with a thrill of enthusiasm deepening into awe, how that face would look in the front of the battle, when those majestic features were lit up with the fire of war.

It was time to say good-bye. The man was passing along shutting the carriage doors. Gilbert held out his hand for a last farewell. Miss Montalvan took it, held it a moment, and, moved by a sudden impulse, bent forward as if to speak. She checked herself, and merely said, as she pressed his hand, "God bless you, God protect you, dear brother!" Her lip quivered as she spoke. The responsive pressure of his hand was still warm on hers, when the bell rung, the door was shut, the guard blew his whistle, and with a snort the train moved slowly away from the platform. A covert smile of triumph flowed like dusky light into the face of Fowler as he watched the train disappear, and then turned his eyes upon the young and beautiful girl beside him. Alas! poor girl, is *he* gone at last, that would have shielded thee with his life from the terrible fate which now impends?

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MIDNIGHT ATTEMPT.

FOWLER and the ladies returned to the Castle; met in the evening at the dinner-table; went to the drawing-room afterwards and had some music, reading, and talk; and rather earlier than usual separated for the night. Fowler retired to the library, which had for some time been used by the baronet as a sitting-room. He sat down, thought over his plans, and glanced vacantly over the papers that lay upon the table. By and by he went back to the drawing-room, as if for something he had forgotten, but really to see if any of the ladies were still there. No one there; they had all gone for the night; the room was silent and the fire was going out. A strange nervousness began to come over him. He returned to the library, and walked softly up and down the room. When he poured out a glass of brandy and water for himself, he observed how his hand shook, and smiled scornfully at his own weakness, and felt his lip tremble even as he smiled. When he sat down at the table, and drew the beautiful lamp nearer to him, and set himself to read, his eye travelled along the lines, but his mind was busy with other thoughts, and he could scarcely have told, had he been asked, what the book was about. He closed it abruptly, tossed it away upon the sofa, and stood up opposite the mirror. He drew himself up to his full height; he lifted his powerful arms as if to feel

his strength; and then laughed a low scornful laugh, and cursed himself for his weakness. Once in Baltimore he had stood with unflinching nerves thirty paces from a man who was levelling a loaded pistol at his breast; but he trembled from head to foot at the bare thought of facing that pure and gentle girl with the argument and proposition which he was now about to lay before her. Anxiety had sharpened his faculties too; for he thought he heard voices once or twice, and that he had met Fobbles lurking suspiciously on the stairs.

He took out his watch. Half-past twelve. He turned down the lamp; opened the door softly and listened. All silent, saving the deep throb-throb of the clock in the hall. He lighted his candle and went first to his own room. By and by he emerged, listened again for a few moments, and then crossed the marble lobby and began to ascend the softly carpeted stairs. The great lamp that burned low in the hall all night filled the great well of the staircase up and down with a dim and dusky light. He reached the corridor: a night-lamp glimmered at the further end. He listened; passed softly along to the servants' door, secured it, and returned to the door of Miss Montalvan's room. Giant though he was he began to tremble. But he was in for it now; and the purpose was strong within him. Yet every sound was awful. Innocence was slumbering, and guilt was trembling at its own foot-falls. He tried the door at which he now stood. Hark! was that not a step? No; but all was silent as the grave. Gently, in

the dim light, he got out his false key and fitted it to the lock. He pressed it gently—the bolt turned smoothly back in its socket. He had already taken the handle of the door when suddenly, with a noise, loud in his guilty ears as thunder, a door on the other side of the gallery opened; a flood of light poured on him; he heard a firm tread behind him, and turning he found himself face to face with Gilbert Macdonald!

* * * * *

Dark indignation flashed from Gilbert's eyes. Sternly, for a moment, he glared on Fowler. Then, seizing him by the neck, he dragged him from the door, and hurled him aside. Fowler, giant though he was, reeled back, and fell heavily, at his full length upon the floor. Rising to his feet, with a low laugh of affected scorn, but thoroughly confounded, ashamed, and cowed, he looked at Gilbert for a moment and then slowly turned, left the gallery, and descended the stairs. Gilbert followed him. By the time they reached the hall, Fowler's manner had changed. Turning suddenly, his eyes kindling with terrific passion, he shook his heavy hand in Gilbert's face. He seemed for a moment to be choked with rage. Then in a voice, low but terrible with passion, he burst out with an oath. "Listen—listen!" he cried, grinding the words out between his teeth, "you shall bitterly repent this. As I live, you shall!"

He went a few paces farther towards his room, and turned suddenly again.

"What devil was it," he said in the same fierce tone, "that brought you back here—that tempted you

to thwart my purpose? You shall live to curse this night."

He was moving off again, but checked himself. "You struck me," he said. "You dared to lay your hands upon me. You know what that means with me! I shall demand—here or elsewhere I shall have—the satisfaction due to a gentleman."

"To a gentleman!" repeated Gilbert. "To what gentleman? Do you mean, sir, after what you have been attempting to-night—do you mean—do you dare to call yourself a gentleman?"

"I dare, I do—and I demand to be treated as one. *I am* a gentleman. The blood of the Macdonalds of Dunvarlich flows in my veins, sir, as well as in yours."

"The more the pity, sir. You have disgraced it."

"Will you meet me or will you not?" cried Fowler, stamping his foot.

"I will not," said Gilbert calmly.

"Then you are a coward."

"I am—if you mean by a coward, a man who does not choose to be a fool. Meet you! For what? You were engaged in the attempt to perpetrate a diabolical outrage on a defenceless girl. I have baffled you. Is there any point of honour to be settled there? I cannot see it. And if there had been, do you think I should have consented to make a sword or a pistol-shot the judge and arbiter between right and wrong?"

"Ay, ay; try to save your skin with your fine logic," said Fowler tauntingly. "But don't think to thwart me with impunity."

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"I shall look out for that," said Gilbert. "All I say is that if you want my life because I have rescued a defenceless girl from outrage, you must go about the work as any other villain would. Creep into my room in the dark as you were creeping into that one upstairs, and stab me. Go behind a hedge with a blunderbuss, like an Irish assassin, and shoot me as I pass. Do that (if you are resolved to have my life), and die, as it seems to me you deserve to die, by the hangman's hands. But don't think that I shall offer myself as a target for you. You forget that we are in Scotland,—not in the Southern States. Satisfaction! I don't want your life, and my own is needed, I find, to protect the innocent from—'gentlemen!'"

Fowler looked as if he could have sprung on Gilbert like a wild beast, and torn him to pieces. For a moment he stood, quivering with rage, but by a powerful effort, controlling himself, he turned abruptly away, and passed into his room.

The disturbance had by this time roused some of the servants; and Mrs. Caie, in her night-cap and with a cloak thrown over her, a poker in one hand, and a candle in the other, made her appearance in the hall. On seeing Gilbert, she screamed, apparently taking him for a ghost; but, on being reassured by his voice, demanded, half in indignation and half in terror, what the matter was.

"Go first and see that Miss Montalvan has not been alarmed," said Gilbert. "We can talk about this afterwards."

He went into the library, and struck a light.

Before he had got the lamp fairly lit and trimmed, he heard Fowler in his boots cross the marble hall to the door. He heard locks turned; a bolt drawn back, the outer door opened and then shut, with a heavy slam that reverberated thro' the house like thunder.

Gilbert left the library, and met Mrs. Caie at the foot of the staircase.

"Is he away?" she cried excitedly. "O the scoondrel! O the viper!" Her voice quivered with indignation. It was evident that by this time she had come to comprehend something of what had taken place. Most of the servants were by this time astir; but Mrs. Caie induced them to go back to their rooms. Gilbert retired again to the library. By and by he heard the sharp click of horses' hoofs in the court-yard behind the Castle. Mrs. Caie made her appearance again with her candle.

"Hear that!" she said.

"Yes; that's he:" Gilbert replied. "I know the ring of his horse's hoofs. He's off."

"Preserve us!" exclaimed Mrs. Caie with horror. "Aff by himsel' in this dark nicht! It's a wonder to me he's no' afeerd o' meetin' the deevil and his angels. Unless he's yin o' them himsel'."

After a few words more, Mrs. Caie retired; Gilbert was left alone; and the Castle was soon wrapt again in the profound stillness out of which it had been so suddenly and unexpectedly startled.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HOW AND THE WHY.

It is now necessary to account to the reader for Gilbert's unexpected reappearance at so opportune a moment. The fact is, that during the previous week, tho' even Fowler had seen no symptoms of it, Gilbert's suspicions had been aroused. He saw that there was something peculiar between Fowler and Miss Montalvan. He could see that Fowler was enamoured of Miss Montalvan; and once or twice he had caught his eyes gloating upon her with a look that Gilbert did not like. He had observed that Miss Montalvan, on the other hand, rather avoided Fowler than otherwise, and at times treated him with a proud disdain that was scarcely consistent with the idea of reciprocated love. He had been told by Mary that Fowler and Miss Montalvan "understood one another;" but he could see that the understanding, if it existed at all, was of a most remarkable kind. Had Gilbert known of the engagement which had actually been made between them, he would not have felt at liberty to oppose it in any way; but he had no confidence in Fowler, and, being acquainted with his reckless and unprincipled character, he regarded him as a dangerous man, and one whom he would have been better pleased to see anywhere than staying at the Castle, and associating intimately with Miss Montalvan and Mary. All these circumstances put him on

the alert; and his suspicions were thoroughly aroused when, by and by, he discovered that Fowler was endeavouring, indirectly and in a cautious underhand way, to influence the family arrangements, so as to be left behind with Miss Montalvan when the others were gone. Gilbert, had he not been on the eve of departure from the country, would have contented himself with staying at Dunvarlich, and taking care that no harm came to his adopted sister. But he had to sail in a few days, and would have no further opportunity of ascertaining whether his suspicions were well founded or not, and protecting Miss Montalvan if they were. He therefore resolved, if possible, to bring matters to a crisis while his help would avail. Accordingly, without betraying the least suspicion, he allowed all the arrangements most suitable to Fowler's scheme to be made, contenting himself with remaining on the alert.

Two circumstances had occurred that most powerfully confirmed his suspicions, and at the same time suggested the course of action which he should adopt. One day, returning from Perth on horseback, and meaning to go on to Pipsley Toll, where there was to be a dog-show, he turned off the walk and rode across the lawn to the window of Fowler's room, which stood eight or nine feet from the ground, meaning to ask Fowler to accompany him. On approaching the window, which was so high that he could see in only by rising in the stirrups, he discovered Fowler busily engaged at the table taking the impression of a key in wax. He drew back without being seen, and kept the circumstance to himself. Three days afterwards.

Fobbles (who had always considered that he owed his special allegiance to Captain Macdonald, since it was he who had engaged him) came up to him in his room, and told him, confidentially, that he had seen "Mista Fowla" at Miss Montalvan's room-door, trying a key in the lock. He didn't know what was up, but he thought it his duty to "tell the Capting, Sir Chawles being away." Gilbert asked if Fowler had seen him. No, Mr. Fowler's back had been towards him at the time, and Fobbles had made no noise that could have attracted his attention. Gilbert commended Fobbles for his vigilance, and enjoined the strictest secrecy.

No doubt was now left on Gilbert's mind as to Fowler's designs, and he accordingly instructed Fobbles quietly to see that the room on the opposite side of the gallery from the young ladies' rooms was made fit to pass the night in, but on no account to attract anyone's attention. He went on meanwhile with his own preparations for departure, and on the appointed day, as we have seen, went off by the train for the South: but after giving instructions to the guard to look after his luggage, he got out at the first station, which was fully nine miles from Dunvarlich, and directed his steps homewards. It was night before he reached. He entered the grounds by a back way to escape observation, was admitted into the Castle by Fobbles, and retired unobserved to the room referred to, taking his pistols with him, lest there should arise any occasion for using them. Then he locked the door, and waited till the time for action should

arrive. He heard Miss Montalvan, about eleven o'clock, go into her room opposite, and turn the lock. Shortly before midnight he heard two servants pass to the room at the farther end of the gallery; and it was about an hour after, when all the house was wrapt in stillness, that he heard Fowler enter the corridor, pass to the servants' room, return to Miss Montalvan's, and proceed to open the door with his false key. The *denouement* is already known to the reader.

Next morning Gilbert was busy writing letters, when the breakfast bell rung. Just as it finished, the door opened, and Miss Montalvan came in. Her face was paler than usual. Gilbert rose, with a smile, to receive her. She took his hands for a moment, and then, letting them go suddenly, she threw her arms affectionately round his neck, and kissed him.

"My dear Gilbert," she exclaimed with deep feeling; and stopped.

It was not necessary for her to say more. The beautiful act, the feeling that looked from her eyes, told better than words could have done the depth of her gratitude.

"The Pipsleys are in the breakfast-room," she said. "You need say nothing. They will not be surprised at your re-appearance."

She made no allusion at all to Fowler.

"Evelyn, you will have to pack up and come south with me to-day," said Gilbert. "My orders admit of no further delay, and I must see you under my father's care before I go."

She nodded her head with a sweet smile, and said, "I shall be ready."

Breakfast passed as usual—no reference being made to the proceedings of the night before. After breakfast, arrangements were made: the carriage was ordered for the Miss Pipsleys: and Miss Montalvan, so soon as they were gone, made preparations for her journey. By the afternoon train, Gilbert and she, accompanied by Fobbles, set off for London.

CHAPTER XV.

SIR CHARLES FINDS THE TRUE REMEDY THIS TIME.

DR. JEAN DE LA DOUCHE had been from home when Sir Charles Macdonald reached Worsley, having gone to Ireland to see the working of a new sort of bath. The baronet and his daughter put up at the hotel till the doctor should return; and here they were now joined by Gilbert, accompanied, to their amazement, by Miss Montalvan. Tremendous was the baronet's wrath and indignation when he learned what had taken place at Dunvarlich since his departure.

"I'll tell you what," cried the fiery baronet, "if that scoundrel ever dares to show face again, I'll have him horse-whipped within an inch of his life—I will." And he looked as if he meant it.

Though ailing very much, Sir Charles was able to go and see his son embark with his regiment for the Crimea. Gilbert took him and the young ladies into

the state-room of the ship, and introduced them to the Colonel, and several of his brother officers—including Lieutenant Boldiston, who was in exuberant spirits at the prospect of wading in gore, and who insisted on being presented to the ladies, to whose health, on the way out, he always drunk an extra glass when he could get it. The troops embarked, and the hour of departure came. The gallant ship, with the roof of her long deck-cabin crowded with soldiers, went out of dock with colours flying, followed by the enthusiastic cheers of the multitude that swarmed the piers to see her go. Farewell—farewell! The ship has dropped down the river, and friends have parted now that shall meet again no more.

Sir Charles and the young ladies returned with saddened hearts to Worsley. Dr. De la Douche was back from Ireland by this time, and called to see the baronet at his hotel. The doctor was a small, pink-faced, cordial little gentleman, who immediately inspired Sir Charles with new hope by the lively enthusiasm with which he spoke of the wonderful efficacy of the water treatment. He listened to Sir Charles's account of his own case, nodding his head and smiling with fresh radiancy at every new item.

"My dear sir," he exclaimed, when Sir Charles had got through, "I am delighted to find from your admirable statement, that this is one of the cases for which hydropathy is peculiarly adapted. Your indigestion, sir—your gout—everything—will disappear before the baths. You will be astonished, sir. I may safely say that you will be astonished. I will introduce you

to-morrow to an Irish baronet, Sir Patrick O'Boughel, who came to me worse than you are—a great deal worse than you are, and is now almost completely restored to health. Only been four months with us. You will be astonished, sir. I have scores of such cases. But Sir Patrick's was remarkably like yours. Remarkably so. Symptoms the same: cause the same."

"Then you quite understand the nature of my complaint," said the baronet.

"Quite, sir, quite," replied Dr. De la Douche with animation. "A case of gout arising from a morbid secretion in your system, sir. That's all. But the water applications will remove that—very soon remove that, sir."

Fobbles, who had just been in with a letter for the baronet, looked severely at the little doctor, and lingering for a moment at the door to hear him finish his sentence, retired and joined Jenny in the servants' room.

"My 'eye, Jenny," he exclaimed, "but the guv'ner's a soft feller, he is!"

"What noo?" asked Jenny, looking up with a smile.

"You won't guess," replied Fobbles, "wot this new covey says ails him."

"Weel, what is it?"

"You won't believe it. He says the guv'ner's gout is owing to some morbid ambition in his sister!"

"Some what?" exclaimed Jenny, with comical surprise.

"Morbidity in his sister."

"In his sister! That's Mistriss Faydin' o' Edinburgh?"

"I s'pose so. Don't know, at least, as the gov'nor's got any more sisters."

"Weel, weel, I never heard the like o' that. I'm sure I never saw naethin' wrang wi' Mistriss Faydin'."

"But suppose you had," said Fobbles, "wot the dickens could her ambition have to do with the gov'nor's gout?"

"I aint a doctor, thank 'eaven," he continued; "but I knows wot's wot as well as most of 'em. More than some of 'em, witness this 'ere cove. And will any man—will any man or woman," cried Fobbles, in a tone of lofty indignation, "stand up afore me, in his *compass mentles*, and tell me that Mrs. Fayding's ambition, or any other body's, can infect our gov'nor's jints. Pooh! Gammon!"

"The man must ha' been haverin'," said Jenny.

"But suppose," said Fobbles, condescending to argument, "suppose this 'ere umbug wos right, how can it mend matters to put the gov'nor into cold water? That's wot I want to know? If it wos the gov'nor's sister they wos putting in, it would be according to Cocker so far. It might take down *her* ambition a peg or two, if she has any. But to put our innocent and 'ighly respectable gov'nor into cold water, if it's his sister's ambition as does all the mischief, is tuggin' at the wrong tooth, in my opinion."

"Well, well," he added, with a hopeless jerk of his head; "if the gov'nor *will* listen to every 'umbug as calls himself a doctor, vy there aint no use our talk-

ing, Jenny. Only I'll tell you wot. If he *does* go into that cove's water-works, he'll pay as much for every drop as if it wos A l Ottomans roses. I knows them doctors. My eye, this chap 'll make a good spec out o' the guv'ner's sister. See if he don't!"

Next day, Dr. De la Douche conducted Sir Charles through his establishment. He showed him the copper baths, the electro-chemical baths, barege baths, and all the other sorts of baths; explaining their respective uses with great volubility and enthusiasm, as they passed from one room to another. The baronet was astonished and delighted.

"The system, sir," he said, "the system impresses me."

Dr. De la Douche also introduced him to Sir Patrick O'Boughel, a hale-looking, burly gentleman with little tufts of whisker sticking out from his cheeks, and another and longer tuft on his chin that hung down like a little tail. Sir Patrick fully corroborated, in a loud and jovial voice, everything that Dr. De la Douche had told Sir Charles about him.

"Why, sor," he said, "when I came here, not a month ago, I was as wake as wather-gruel. Waker if anything. Now, sor, you see what I am,—bliss you, a new craychure intirely." And Sir Patrick O'Boughel gave himself two great knocks on his chest, as if the soundness of his renovated constitution could be tested like wood by the sound.

Sir Charles drove back to his hotel in high spirits. "My dears," he said, as he poured out another glass of port after dinner, "I am glad to say that I have

found the true system of treatment at last. No wonder that Sutherland and Wingwie, and men of that stamp, could do me no good. They didn't even know what ailed me. It seems it is some morbid secretion in my system that has been doing all this mischief."

"Some morbid secretion," repeated Sir Charles, holding up his glass for a moment between his eye and the window.

"Well, how is this to be got rid of?" he said, taking a sip and setting down his glass. "Why, by means of water. Water,—nature's own remedy. It keeps the skin thoroughly clean, it keeps the pores open, it allows the functions fair play; and if the organs are relaxed, as Dr. De la Douche says is the case with mine, why it helps them by its power of extraction. I saw a man to-day who had been dozed with mercury till his limbs wouldn't support him, and his teeth began to fall out of his head. Well, he told me himself that he hadn't been a week in what they call the pack, when the sheet used to come off him quite blue with the mercury extracted from his system. It is wonderful—really wonderful," said the baronet, taking up his glass again. "Thank Heaven, I have found the true remedy at last." And the baronet drained his glass, and called on Fobbles to help him to the arm-chair.

Sir Charles's ardour was considerably damped by the discovery that he should have to reside in the Hydropathic Establishment, where the fare was extremely simple, and all stimulants were forbidden,—nothing more comforting being allowed at night than

a tumbler of hot water before going to bed. Dr. De la Douche, however, explained that this régime was an essential part of the system, without which the water treatment would not have fair play. So the baronet reluctantly submitted.

"At the same time," he said, "I believe it to be a mistake—a profound mistake. I could never have come thro' what I have, but for my glass of wine. Never. And I am perfectly satisfied, sir, that my constitution will not be able to stand very long without it."

The young ladies, having received a pressing invitation from the baronet's old friend, Lady Erlingford, who stayed in London, it was arranged that they should go there, Jenny accompanying them as their maid, while the baronet, with Fobbles to attend him, took up his abode at the Worsley Baths, and submitted experimentally to the treatment of Dr. Jean De la Douche.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. FOBBLES DESCRIBES THE HYDROPATHIC RÉGIME.

SIR CHARLES had not been long under the new treatment before he began to feel himself decidedly improving. He took vapour baths; the douche, when he could bear it; and the Turkish bath twice every week. So manifest was his improvement in the course of a few weeks that even the scepticism of Fobbles began to give away; and Sir Charles expressed

to Dr. De la Douche his firm conviction that if he were only allowed his glass of wine at dinner now, or even a knot of sugar and a toothful of brandy in his hot water at night, his cure would soon be complete. To this, however, the little doctor would not—could not consent. In little more than two months Sir Charles was so much better that arrangements were made for a return to Dunvarlich, the summer being now in its prime. At Dr. De la Douche's suggestion Fobbles had been initiated by one of the bath attendants into the mysteries of packing in the wet sheet—an operation which the doctor recommended in the event of any reappearance of the old symptoms.

They were all glad to get back once more to Dunvarlich, which the young ladies thought had never looked so beautiful as it did now in the flashing sunshine of these glorious summer months. In the servants' hall, Fobbles and Jenny were welcomed with much rejoicing; and a special entertainment was given in their honour, to which Blacklock and Jenny's father were invited. Fobbles was in high glory, and his new sketches of metropolitan life and manners excited much astonishment and admiration. Numerous were the questions put to him in regard to the "cold watter cure"—as Mrs. Caie, who had joined the company, persisted in calling it, eschewing the more learned name.

"It aint mere cold water," said Fobbles. "There's all warieties, you pays your money, and you takes your choice. There's water cold as hice; there's bilin' water; and there's innumerable graduates between.

They tumbles you into coppers one day—locks you up in a box the next”—

“What do you say?” exclaimed Mrs. Caie incredulously. “Lock you in a box!”

“Fact, mam,” said Fobbles. “I found the guv’ner in it one day. I remember going into the baths to look arter him. ‘Where’s Sir Chawles?’ I sez to one of the men, for I couldn’t see him nowhere. ‘Here he is,’ sez he, ‘a-sittin’ in the way-pur bath.’ Well, I looked about, and at last what should I see but a great big box, and the guv’ner’s head stickin’ out of a hole in the lid.”

There was a general laugh.

“No mistake about it,” said Fobbles, seeing that Mrs. Caie still looked incredulous. “I see’d it with my own highs. Drops of inspiration was runnin’ down his nose, and a reg’lar steam was coming out all round the side o’ the hole, as if the guv’ner was bilin’ alive inside of the box, like a lobster.”

“I thought the baths they had wis like oor ain plunge and shoo’er bath,” said Mrs. Caie.

“Ho, they’ve got all sorts,” responded Fobbles with a wave of his hand, “and fifty ways o’ going about the work. Why, they’ll pack you up in wet sheets, and leave you steamin’ away there like a bilin’ codfish. The pack they call that. Werry scientific thing is the pack,” said Fobbles with an awful shake of his head. “Werry. I studied the pack for five weeks, under the personal eyes of Dr. Dela Deuce himself.” Fobbles took out his pocket handkerchief, and blew his nose with great deliberation, to allow time

for this announcement to inspire the company with a proper sense of awe. "So if there's a screw loose about any of your internals"—said Fobbles looking round the company, as he stuffed his handkerchief into his pocket again—"and you want a pack, I'm yer man—Doctor 'Enery Fobbles, Ph.D., X.Y.Z., U.B., &c.: advice free gratis; childring, clergymen, and the representiments of the free press, 'arf price. But there's more than packin' to be seen at Worsley. They plops you into hot baths, cold baths, and tepid baths; copper baths, sidlitz baths, and patent-medicine-galvanical baths, where you sit holdin' on to a chain with a galvanical battery of 400 'oss power a-pumpin' of electric fire into yer marrer bones."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Glowb. "Dis it no burn ye?"

"Not so long as you keep under water, mam," replied Fobbles. "That's wot the water's there for. Otherwise you'd curl up like a bit o' burning paper, afore you could say Jack Robinson."

"Spontaneous combustion," suggested M'Lodde.

"Spontalious combustion exactly," said Fobbles with a nod. "Then there's another sort o' bath," he continued, "the guv'ner had now and then, that comes roarin' down atop of you from a great big spout. Dooce bath they calls it, and a dooce of a bath it was. Ni-haggara's all wery well in its own way. But for a reg'lar, thumpin', knock-down catarac', that hammers the breath out o' yer body, try the dooce bath. I took it once. I didn't get my wind back for more than a week."

Fobbles then proceeded to describe the Turkish bath, and the various processes. "And so rum it is, you can't think," added Fobbles with a laugh, "to see the gents lying on shelves and goin' about half-naked."

"Fie, fie! I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Fobbles," said Mrs. Caie sharply.

"Taint my fault," remonstrated Fobbles.

"You don't mean to say it's true?" said Mrs. Caie.

"It's as true, mam, as you wears French curls," retorted Fobbles.

"But, losh me! Mr. Fobbles," said Jenny blushing violently, "you dinna' mean that—Sir Chairles wis—wis naked?"

"Well, not stark," replied Fobbles—"not like the statutes in the 'all upstairs exactly; but as near it as one could come vithout reducing 'imself to a 'apron o' figs or a simple pocket 'ankercher. Of course Sir Chawles wasn't any worse than the rest of 'em. Its the reg'lar costume. A kind o' small kilt girded round his loins, and a hextra sheet for full dress. But not one 'atom more."

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Mrs. Caie with virtuous horror.

"It's immoral in my opinion," said M'Lodle.

"Why, what could you expect?" argued Fobbles. "It's the Turks' bath, and everybody knows they isn't particularly moral. No wonder, in my 'umble opinion, when the Hemperor himself don't do nothing but cut people's 'eads off with his Grand Wizard, and sits all day like a workin' tailor—see the pikchurs—suckin' opium through a long pipe: not to mention

two or three hundred wives and porcupines as he keeps in his harum, and makes the round of monthly or annywayly, as the case may be, like the water rates."

"O la! Mr. Fobbles," cried Jenny, putting up her hands, "I'll scream if you say anither word."

"Well, scream away," retorted Fobbles. "It won't make the thing no better, and it won't make it no wuss." It was deemed advisable, however, to change the subject.

CHAPTER XVII.

"ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE."

It is now necessary to follow, for a brief space, the movements of Fowler. After leaving Dunvarlich on the memorable night the events of which we have described, he rode into Perth, and betook himself to the house of a retired sea captain there—Wyper by name—whose acquaintance Fowler had made, and who was a man of somewhat kindred character. Exasperated by the humiliation he had met with at Gilbert's hands, maddened that his schemes had been so completely baffled when they seemed on the very eve of success, Fowler left Dunvarlich filled with wild projects of revenge. He would dog Gilbert, he would follow him out of the country, he would never rest till he had wreaked vengeance upon him.

A little reflection induced him to moderate his feelings. The truth was that Fowler's whole being

had become absorbed in one burning desire for Miss Montalvan. To possess her, he was willing to control every other passion and make any and every sacrifice that might be necessary to the attainment of this end. To avenge himself on Gilbert in the only way then in his power would be to sacrifice a primary to a secondary object. Fowler, therefore, buried his vindictive purpose deep in his breast, and tried to content himself with the thought that his time for vengeance would yet come. Next morning he took the train for the south, leaving instructions about the forwarding of his luggage from Dunvarlich.

In the course of the week he went to Tunbridge, where he had sent Jane Everett to board with an old woman who had once served in his house at Litford. Here a scene took place that was to terminate their connection. It was evening, and Fowler, who had gone to see the girl, was alone with her in the little parlour. Her face was full of passionate earnestness.

"O Macdonald!" she cried, "you will take me—you will own me—as your wife."

He smiled with a playful scorn.

"Jane, my dear girl, don't talk nonsense."

But she was not to be put off. It was with her now a question of life or death—the death of honour, of self-respect, of hope—that death most terrible of all, that feeds on life, and will not die. She pled with touching pathos, sinking on her knees beside Fowler, creeping nearer and nearer to him, and seeking to take his hand, and press it to her bosom.

Fowler was irritated. He drew back his hand.

"Come stop this," he said. "What are you talking about? Marry you! Jane, I am the son of a Scottish baronet!"

"And I the daughter of an honest man," replied the woman with a flash of feeling that was sublime. "The daughter of an honest man—the child of a free people."

But the light fell from her face, and again she began to plead with him. "O, I will love you, I will serve you, I will slave for you, I will follow you over the world. Only make me your wife, Macdonald, I beseech, I implore you. Whatever you wish me to be, I will learn to be. I was clever when I was a little girl at school. I picked up everything very fast. I will take lessons, I will read books, I will learn manners, I will adorn myself, so that no one shall know that I was not a lady born. You once told me," she said, looking up into his face with touching earnestness, "that I was handsome—that I was beautiful—that I might pass for the daughter of the finest lady in England. O Macdonald, Macdonald! for the love of God—for the sake"—her voice quivered—"the sake of our—poor—Charlie!"

Fowler's face darkened. He shook her off impatiently.

"I tell you it cannot be," he said. "I am engaged."

"No, no," said the woman. "Not now!"

"I tell you, I am. Now have done."

"Engaged again!" cried the woman, heedless of his injunction. "Again—to her?—to the young lady at Dunvarlich Castle?"

"Perhaps so," said Fowler, with careless defiance.

The woman glared at him for a moment.

"And suppose that she"—the woman checked herself, but a terrible thought had flashed like lightning across her face.

"Had it not been for her," she began again, "would you have made me your wife?"

"No, once for all, no!"

The woman sprang to her feet, her whole frame quivering with passion. She turned from him, and pressed her hands convulsively upon her face, gasping.

Fowler looked at her for a few moments; then rose sulkily and took his hat.

"I'm going," he said. "I've had enough of this sort of thing for one day. Good night. Get over this nonsense before to-morrow."

She said nothing. She did not so much as lift her head.

Fowler left the room. He would perhaps have turned back to say a kinder word, had he known that he was parting from the poor girl that he had wronged, to see her again no more.

That night Jane Everett put up a few things into a bundle, such as she could carry in her hand, and early next morning, before the family was astir, she left the house, and set out on foot upon the road to London. When Fowler returned to the house she was gone.

There is a sort of love that is more bitter to the soul than hatred, a sort of caress that is more loathsome than abuse—that affection which ought to be real but is not, and mocks the yearning heart with the hideous

caricature of love. It was this that Jane Everett cast from her, with nothing else in all the world to cling to in its place. Fowler's presence reminded her of the days of her purity, reminded her of the ecstatic joy of that time when she delighted to lose and forget herself in the glory of Fowler's love. It reminded her of her little babe, and of the hope when she came across the ocean, that the sight of it would touch its father's heart, and make him again what he had been—what at least she thought he had been. It made her yearn passionately for his love; but made everything less than that worthless—made the caresses, that would have mocked her with the form of that love while it withheld the living reality, intolerable, hateful, agonizing. She could bear neglect and cruelty from a world that owed her nothing, more easily than she could content herself with empty kindness from a heart that owed her infinitely more. And so, severed from her last hopes, tired of life, reckless of herself, she entered the vast teeming city, caring nothing for the fate that awaited her. She found what thousands like her are finding year by year. Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.

* * * * *

One night, some months later, a woman emerged from one of the long narrow lanes in Southwark. The night was dark and wet. The woman turned into Red Cross Street, and apparently attracted by the brilliant light thrown out into the street from a vegetable shop on the opposite side, which formed a cheerful contrast to the dark and dreary night, she

crossed. She walked with a somewhat irregular step, and as she drew near the light, you could have seen that her eyes were inflamed. There were several customers in the shop; but the woman's attention was immediately attracted by the face of a little boy—a mere child, that was standing at the door. It was a little thing, with close-knit features, and singularly large and thoughtful eyes. The woman gazed at the child with the deepest interest. Yes; it was like—very like. She moved nearer, and put out her arms as if to fondle the child. But the strong light, flaring on her emaciated face and inflamed eyes, gave her a ghastly look; and the child, when it saw her, retreated into the shop screaming. A stout woman with a basket on her arm turned quickly, and putting her hand round the child's shoulder, addressed the woman outside in an angry tone,—“Keep away, what are you doing to the child?” The woman, still looking earnestly at the child, smiled, as if to soothe and attract it. But the smile was ghastly and full of pain, and the child only clung more tightly to its mother's dress.

“Come, be off!” said a man belonging to the shop, looking sharply towards the door. “Do you hear me? Be off. None o' your sort allowed here!”

The woman hesitated, stared at him with a wild look for a moment, and went away.

She turned into the nearest lane, sat down upon the muddy kerb-stone, covered her face with her hands, and began to sob convulsively, giving vent, at times, to a low moan, inexpressibly sad.

A policeman came up, and said roughly, "Hey! What are you about here?"

The woman made no response.

The policeman bent down and shook her by the arm. She looked up. The dim light of the nearest lamp fell upon her face. Her countenance had changed; it was haggard and ghastly beyond description. There was a wild, fearful light in her eye.

"Where do you stay?" said the policeman.

"Nowhere."

"Where are your friends?"

"I have none."

"Come, move on out o' this. You're drunk."

The woman got up without a word, and slunk away. She turned into another lane, and coming to a dark recess, crouched into it, and covered her face with her hands. She sat there long, as motionless as the deep shadow that enveloped her. The night rain wept in the dark, silent street. What thoughts may have possessed that poor, homeless soul, as she sat crouching there, God only knows!

The chimes had struck one before she rose. She stood for more than a minute, a dark and lonesome figure, and then began to thread her way through the deserted streets in the direction of the river. In one of the by-lanes nearest the river the causeway was under repair. A dull red lamp, fixed on the top of a wooden post in the middle of the causeway, threw down a dim heavy light upon the piles of stone around. The woman had passed this and gone on a little way, when she stopped, as if a sudden thought had struck

her, turned, paused for a few moments, and then slunk back, lifted one of the stones, drew it under her shawl, and again went on. She emerged close by the bridge. She skulked along by the walls, and got out upon the bridge. She stopped again, and listened. There were footsteps before her, but they were becoming fainter and fainter as they receded in the distance. Then all was still, save the low mysterious hum that rose far-off from the slumbering city. When she stretched out her neck and listened, she could hear the water washing and surging far below, as it swept past the buttresses of the bridge. She crept down, took off her shawl, and began to tie the stone into it. Suddenly she started. Her ear had caught the sound of a step. She rose, mounted the parapet hastily, twined her arms in the loaded shawl, and without a moment's pause, sprang out into the darkness. There was a pause: then far down below a faint plunge, and all was silent again, save the muffled hum of the vast city, and the washing and surging of the tide as it swept past the dark buttresses of the bridge.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY.

WE must now go back a little way to follow the fortunes of Fowler. Unable to ascertain where Jane Everett had gone after her mysterious disappearance

from Tunbridge, Fowler threw aside his cares about her with something like a sense of relief: and leaving Tunbridge, he went to Portsmouth, and afterwards to the Isle of Wight, yachting a great deal, and seeking, by variety and excitement, to drown the recollection of his discomfiture and humiliation at Dunvarlich, and concoct new plans for the accomplishment of his designs.

In the course of the autumn, accident opened up a way such as he could never have anticipated. Mingling one day with some seafaring men on the beach at Cowes, one of them, learning his name and descent, exclaimed, touching his hat,—

“Is’t possible as your father was Sir Gilbert Macdonald down in Scotland somewheres?”

Yes: he was.

“And he was spliced, warn’t he, to Cep’n Montgomery o’ the ‘Billy-ruffian’s’ widdler?”

Fowler, who was lighting a cigar at the moment, merely nodded assent.

“Well now, it’s curis. Vy, it’s like bringin’ back old years to think on’t. I know’d Cep’n Montgomery wery well. I used to see ’im at Portsmouth now and then.”

“Yes,” continued the old sailor—for Fowler sat smoking his cigar, without troubling himself to converse—“my hold shipmet, ’Arry Swobs, vos boy in Cep’n Montgomery’s ship ven she vos lost on the coast of Barbara. There was on’y four of ’em got off, as I heerd once. Poor old Bill Pennington, as vos bred in the same place vith Swobs and me, vos drowned

—God rest his soul!—and so was they all, savin' 'Arry and the Cep'n, and two more."

Fowler's attention was arrested.

"Saving whom?" he asked.

"Savin' 'Arry and the Cep'n, and two more," repeated the man.

Fowler looked at him thoughtfully for some moments.

"Do you mean to say that Captain Montgomery was not lost in the wreck?"

"Of course he wosn't. Wy, he and 'Arry was among the black niggers weeks and weeks, as I've heard 'Arry tell of many a time; and 'Arry kep' alongside the Cep'n till they made Egypt, vere the Cep'n kick'd the bucket, somehow 'r'other, and 'Arry had to work his way home alone."

Fowler thought for a moment in silence.

"How long did Captain Montgomery live after the wreck?" he asked with rapidly-increasing interest.

"Well, I couldn't say sartin. It might be a month, and it might be a year. I couldn't swear, it's so long, sir, since I heerd about it."

"Is this man—Swobs, I mean—is he here?"

"Here! Bless you, no," said the man with a laugh. "'Twas in Yarmouth I see'd him last, more'n twenty year ago."

"Do you know, then, where he can be found?" asked Fowler.

"I dunno' if poor 'Arry's to be found at all," replied the sailor. "Like enough he be in Davie Jones's locker afore now."

"Look here," said Fowler, taking out his purse,

and putting a sovereign into the man's hand. "Find out what you can about Swobs: and if you can bring him to me, or tell me where I can see him, you shall have another. I shall be at the Royal George Arms for a week yet. Bring me word there."

Two days passed, and on the third the old sailor called at the Royal George. He had been unable, notwithstanding all his searching and asking, to find out where his old shipmate was now, or whether he was alive even; but he had found out that there was a man—a sailing-master in a ship that ran between Liverpool and New Orleans—who had married Swobs's daughter, and would be sure to know all about him.

Fowler was even better than his word, and sent the old sailor away rejoicing.

He was excited with the hope that something would come out of this to his advantage. It had certainly not been known to any of the family that Captain Montgomery had survived the wreck. It was therefore possible (no doubt, from the old sailor's account, unlikely, but still possible) that the Captain had been alive when his wife married Sir Gilbert Macdonald—perhaps even (and Fowler felt his brain begin to reel with wild exultation at the thought)—perhaps even when her son, now Sir Charles, was born; in which case Sir Charles would be illegitimate, and he, Fowler, would be the legal heir to the baronetcy and the estates of Dunvarlich. Fired with this thought—less because it opened up the prospect of rank and wealth than because it opened a way to his schemes both of

love and vengeance—Fowler lost no time in going to Liverpool and prosecuting his inquiries: with what result we shall by and by see.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BARONET GETS WORSE IN SPITE OF THE "TRUE REMEDY," AND GRUMBLES ABOUT THE WAR.

DURING all this time the country was in a state of anxiety and excitement about the Crimean war. The newspapers were full of it. It was the grand topic of conversation in every circle, high and low—in the court, in the clubs, in the market, in the street, in the tap-room, and at every dinner-table in the land. We may be sure that the little circle at Dunvarlich formed no exception to the rule. The greater part of the forenoon was generally spent in reading articles and correspondents' letters about the war. Letters were received regularly from Gilbert, who expressed himself somewhat impatient of the inaction to which the nature of the military operations before Sebastopol subjected the cavalry.

In the meantime, Sir Charles's gout returned with almost as much virulence as ever; and what was worse, it now began to affect his sight. At first, he wore a green shade over his eyes, and found that this sufficiently softened the light to allow him to read

with comfort for an hour or so at a time. But as his health grew worse his eyes became more sensitive, his sight was very much impaired, and at times he was totally blind. Under these trying circumstances the baronet became cross and petulant, swore at the servants, and spoke even to the young ladies in a tone of as much irritation as if they had been the cause of his sufferings. The girls bore all this with patience, and as much as possible with cheerfulness. They took counsel together how to please and entertain the old man; they bore his ill-nature without a murmuring word; they strove by every art in their power to divert his mind from his sufferings; and they read to him, turn about, as much and as often as he pleased. In moments of ease he was evidently conscious of their tenderness and self-sacrificing devotion, and spoke to them with all the warmth of his old affection. But these intervals became fewer. The physical pain he suffered threw a gloom over everything, and magnified each petty worry or disappointment into an almost intolerable grievance. He had come to learn something of Mary's private engagement to Dr. Sutherland, and at times, even in Mary's presence, referred to it in bitter and almost offensive language.

"Yes, yes," he would say petulantly, when she had been gently remonstrating with him about any absurd fancy that he had taken; "I know how it is. You are tired of having to look after your old, broken-down father. You are sick of it. Well, well, you can go away to Sutherland. That's what you want. You need not deny it, Mary. I know better. Well, you

had better go; and leave me alone. O, you'll stay, will you? Humph, I thought so. Wait till I'm dead to make sure of your portion; and then—go and marry a man who insulted and hated your father!"

Poor Mary bore all this and more with sorrowful, uncomplaining patience, though the tears often came into her eyes.

The baronet had not forgotten the advice of Doctor De la Douche. For some time he tried the wet sheet almost every day. But he got no better: indeed, but for his glass of wine, as he often told the Rev. Mr. Burke, when that gentleman came to see him professionally, and drink a glass of Burgundy with him, he could not possibly have survived so long. Fobbles continued to apply the wet sheet as often as Sir Charles ordered him; but he did not hesitate to express his opinion to the other servants that it was doing "the guv'ner" more harm than good.

"Blow'd if he aint steamin' away like a washin'-tub," he said one day on going downstairs, after having swathed Sir Charles in the pack. "It's the thing to bring the fat out of a feller. I'd recommend a course of it to you, M'Lodle.

"But, speakin' serious," added Fobbles, "my private conviction is that the guv'ner's having too much o' this sort o' thing, and if he goes on much longer, blow'd if his corporation, and witals in general, won't be graddy-wally draw'd out, and we'll find nothin' inside the pack some day but his fossils and his anti-mony. See if we don't."

Another circumstance occurred that irritated the

baronet excessively. His neighbour, Elmsley of Balvane, had, as we formerly mentioned, a son in the 33rd Regiment, which had greatly distinguished itself in the battle of Alma, fought on the 20th of September. Elmsley was, of course, in great glory on receiving the intelligence; but he rather injudiciously published a letter he had got from his son, in which, amongst other things, it was stated, as the opinion of the army generally, that the cavalry had not done what was expected of them, and that had they been plucky enough, they might easily have given chase to the Russians after the battle, and captured any number of guns and prisoners. This implied slur upon the force in which his son was an officer cut Sir Charles to the quick, and made him more and more impatient of the comparative inaction which followed the battle of the 20th.

"Confound it!" he would break out, when the *Times* correspondent's letters were being read to him. "Why don't they go in and win? Why don't they storm the place, and chase the Russians out of the Crimea? This isn't war. What's the use of sending out cavalry to keep them in idleness, and make them the laughing-stock of the nation!" The baronet, on such occasions, breathed no benisons on Lord Raglan.

But a day was fast approaching when—alas, for many a gallant fellow!—this state of inglorious repose was suddenly to be changed into a scene of only too frightful activity.

CHAPTER XX.

GILBERT'S FIRST AND LAST BATTLE. THE FAMOUS
CHARGE.

ON a certain Tuesday afternoon, a special messenger came galloping out from Perth. Fresh news, he said, from the seat of war. Telegrams just received. Tremendous action at Balaklava. Sir Colin Campbell's Highlanders, the Scots Greys and Enniskilleners, the Dragoon Guards, and the Light Cavalry Brigade, had all been engaged, and covered themselves with glory. The Light Cavalry Brigade had ridden into the jaws of death, and been cut to pieces.

Miss Montalvan was the first to get the news. Pale as death she hurried in. The intelligence spread like wild-fire through the Castle that news had come from the Crimea, and that Gilbert and his regiment had been cut to pieces. Mary no sooner heard the alarming intelligence than, overpowered by her feelings, she uttered a piercing cry, threw herself upon her knees, and buried her face in her hands. The cry reached the ears of Sir Charles, who was sitting in his invalid chair by the library fire, so ill that probably the others would have tried to save him from the sudden shock. But he had heard the scream; and pulling the bell-rope violently again and again till Fobbles appeared, he demanded to know what the matter was. When he heard the news his colour

changed, and for several moments he sat speechless, staring wildly at Fobbles.

“Cut to pieces!”—“covered themselves with glory!”

Even in that dreadful moment, this last assurance seemed to have fringed the black thunder-cloud with light. The slur that had dimmed the honour of his son's regiment was wiped away.

His excitement became intense. He despatched a messenger to Perth with a message to telegraph to his friend Colonel Whitley of the Guards, for God's sake to telegraph back if there was any further news of his son. The message was despatched, and instructions left that should any reply be received, it was to be sent out to Dunvarlich without a moment's delay. This was all that could be done; but Sir Charles sent his groom to Perth two or three times in the course of the night to ascertain if no answer had yet come.

There was little sleep in the Castle that night. Sir Charles refused to go to bed; and the young ladies, after sitting with him till long past midnight, retired to their own room to weep, and hope against hope, and pray together. The servants below also sat up in grave and solemn conclave till an early hour in the morning.

Fuller particulars came next morning; but there was a whole week of agonizing suspense, before the *Times* came out with that sublime description of the brilliant but tremendous charge of the Light Cavalry Brigade, which sent such a thrill of enthusiasm through the nation. By that very night's post there came a note from Scutari, that turned out to have been ~~out~~

hurriedly on board the steamer just before she sailed. Fobbles brought the letter, and after a moment of ominous hesitation presented it to Miss Montalvan.

She glanced at the address and started. It was written in an unknown hand. The shock was too much even for her. She let the unopened letter drop upon the table, put her hand upon her bosom as if in pain, and turned deadly pale. Mary started to her feet, trembling violently. The poor baronet, with his heavy shade over his eyes, too blind to read, cried eagerly,—

“Evelyn!—Mary! open it, open it! What of my boy? Let me know the worst. O for God’s sake, open it—quick!”

Miss Montalvan, after a moment’s hesitation, took up the letter again, opened it with trembling fingers, and read it,—Mary’s eyes fixed upon her face with a look of agonizing suspense. In a moment she had clasped the note to her bosom with a cry of joy.

“He is alive! Thank Heaven, he is safe!”

The sudden revulsion of feeling was almost too much for them. Mary clasped her hands, and then in a transport of joy embraced her father and sister, weeping all the time. Even the old baronet folded his hands, and lifting up his blind face to heaven, thanked God, tears of gratitude and joy beginning to trickle down his face.

And now the letter was read. It was written from the hospital at Scutari by the same person who had written the address, but signed by Gilbert in a scarcely recognizable hand. It had been written,

apparently at Gilbert's dictation, and was very brief. God had saved him, he said, as by a miracle. It was all he could say just then, as he wished to make sure of the letter going by the first steamer, knowing as he did how anxious they would be, when intelligence of the action at Balaklava reached them. His right wrist had been shattered by a ball, and he had got a lance-thrust in his leg; but he was under good surgical treatment, and doing well. He had signed the note with his left hand. A brief postscript, signed "John M'Ewan, Assistant-surgeon,"—the same person apparently, who had written the letter, stated that "Captain Macdonald was weak in consequence of loss of blood, but was doing well; and if fever did not supervene, he would be able to be up, and perhaps out for the air, in the course of three or four days."

Another letter came by the following mail, this time from one of the adjutants, who knew Gilbert well, and had been near him at the commencement of the famous charge.

An extract from his letter may be interesting to the reader. After describing the position of the different forces prior to the engagement, the adjutant went on to say:—

"I was behind Lord Lucan when Captain Nolan rode up with the quartermaster-general's order to advance. 'Where to?' Lord Lucan asked. Captain Nolan pointed to the Russian host, and said, 'There is the enemy, with the guns in front of him. It is your duty to take them.' Lord Lucan paused a moment, as if to reflect, and then gave the order, but

evidently with great reluctance. It seemed like the order of a madman; but in war, superiors' orders must be obeyed. The order was passed, and in two or three minutes the various squadrons of the brigade began to advance. This was about ten minutes past ten. Captain Macdonald came up at a gallop to within a few yards of where I was, and put himself at the head of his troop. I could not help saying to him, 'What, in the name of goodness, Macdonald, are we to do with those guns, when we *do* take them!' He smiled grimly, and said, 'That is no question for you or for me. Let us mind our duty.' In another moment all the squadrons were in motion, careering on to the front. The guns of the redoubt opened upon us with deadly effect, but without checking our advance for a moment. Captain Macdonald was some little way ahead of me, and I saw him raise his sword and cheer on his men. At that moment a shot struck him in the wrist, tearing his coat and the flesh of his forearm almost to shreds. He must have dropped the reins upon his horse's neck, and snatched the sword with his left hand; for almost immediately after, I saw him riding on, waving his sword in the air to encourage his men. I could see the blood streaming from the shattered arm, which now hung useless at his side. I spurred forward, and cried, 'Good God! Macdonald, fall back.' He paid no attention. I cried to him again. He looked round at me almost fiercely, and motioned me away. I said, 'You are mad. Look at your arm. You can be of no use in that state.' He said, 'I can show my men where to die,' and so rode on.

"I saw that further remonstrance would be unavailing. Indeed, I had no chance; for Captain Macdonald had scarcely turned to the front again, when a shell burst almost at my saddle-bow killing my horse on the spot. I narrowly escaped being ridden over; and when I got to my feet, all I could see ahead of me was the gallant brigade with its flashing sabres, flying onward into the clouds of smoke and fire. I saw no more of the captain till I found him in the hospital; but some of his men who escaped tell me that he charged the battery in grand style, and leapt his horse into the redoubt,—his men following with a loud cheer. How he got back alive, nobody knows. The ride thro' the storm of shot and shell is described by those who saw it, and could give no aid, as one of the most terrific spectacles ever witnessed in war. However, back he did get, with a handful of his men, and no additional wounds except a lance-thrust in the leg. Fever came on last Monday, but he is getting round, and the doctor told me to-day that he has no fear about his ultimate recovery, tho' it may be a work of time. One Major Brooks, who says he is an old friend of yours, and whose wife and family are in Scutari at present, is very anxious to get Captain Macdonald removed to his house, where he will have more comfort and better attendance than he can have at the hospital. The doctor approves of the plan, and thinks he may be removed by the end of the week. The Captain told me to mention that Lieut. Boldiston and Cornet M'Lavish are dead. The lieutenant was shot dead as he was riding up to

the guns; the cornet got back alive, but died in hospital."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BARONET FINDS THE TRUE REMEDY THIS TIME,
AND NO MISTAKE. — GILBERT COMES OUT IN A NEW
CHARACTER.

ONE day the baronet's sister, Mrs. Fayding, made her appearance at the Castle, having come from Edinburgh to hear all the particulars about her nephew, and to express, as she did with extraordinary copiousness of language, her feelings of mingled sorrow and pride. Mrs. Fayding then turned her attention to the baronet himself. She was much shocked to find him in such a pitiable condition—what with his gout, his physical prostration, and his blindness. She renewed her entreaties with the baronet that he would try the system of medicine in which she had now been a firm believer for more than six years. Homœopathy had saved her own life. It had saved Mr. Fayding, after he had been given up by the allopaths. She could name a score of persons amongst her own acquaintances whose lives it had saved: and she was persuaded—she was certain—that it would restore Sir Charles. Let him, at least, consult Professor Frittlit, her physician in Edinburgh. Professor Frittlit was an honest out-spoken man, and would tell Sir Charles at once what could be done for him, and whether the system would suit.

Sir Charles pooh-poohed the suggestion at first. No, no: he had heard of homœopathy, and he believed it was a bit of humbug. But Mrs. Fayding was not to be discouraged. She renewed her solicitations next day, and the day after, and the day after that, with so much earnestness and sincerity, and enforced her arguments by an appeal to so many cases of remarkable cures effected by the homœopathic treatment, that she quite convinced the young ladies, who forthwith joined her in entreating Sir Charles to give homœopathy at least a trial.

“Make inquiries for yourself, my dear Charles,” Mrs. Fayding would say. “I don’t want you to go by what I say. I know you think women are apt to believe without sufficient reason—to be carried away by their feelings, and so on. But test these cases for yourself. You would really oblige me by doing so. It is all I ask; and then I am sure you will agree with us that the system is worth trying.”

Having got him to promise thus much, Mrs. Fayding went home, leaving with the baronet a list of names for inquiry, including those of persons with whom he was himself acquainted. The baronet was not to be duped again. He made his inquiries in such a way as to leave no room for mistake. The result astonished him. He found that Mrs. Fayding’s statements, though coloured a little by her imagination, were in the main correct, and that one or two of the cases most nearly resembling his own had been treated by Professor Frittlit with remarkable success.

The baronet no sooner ascertained this than he

made up his mind at once to give the system a trial. He wrote Mrs. Fayding. A house was taken in a suitable part of Edinburgh, and so soon as the baronet felt himself fit for the journey, he went there, accompanied by the young ladies.

In accordance with arrangements previously made, Professor Frittlit called next day. The professor was a tall, dark, keen-eyed gentleman, somewhat abrupt in his manner. He subjected Sir Charles to a rapid but thorough examination; and expressed his belief, in answer to Sir Charles's interrogations, that homœopathy, if it got a fair trial, would effect a cure. Thereupon he called for two tumblers full of water; took a minute vial out of a box he carried in his pocket, and dropped one little drop into one of the tumblers; selected another minute vial, and dropped one little drop from *it* into the other tumbler; replaced the little vials in the box, closed the lid with a sharp click, and returned it to his pocket.

"Now," he said to Sir Charles, "let these tumblers be kept covered; and take a tea-spoonful from each of them, alternately, every four hours during the day."

"A tea-spoonful!" exclaimed the baronet, glancing up from the colourless water to Professor Frittlit's face with a smile, in which surprise and amusement were curiously blended with a suspicion that he was being made game of.

"Yes: a tea-spoonful every four hours, alternately."

The baronet expressed his surprise at the minuteness of the dose. Professor Frittlit, however, explained to him that quantity was no test of curative power.

"Look, sir, at the phenomenon of vaccination. A minute particle of virus inserted under the skin at one point protects the whole system—protects it, not for a day, nor for a week merely, but for seven years, and in some degree for a whole lifetime, against small-pox, one of the most loathsome and terrible of diseases."

Yes, so it did. That was a strong fact. The baronet had never thought on it before in that light.

"Why should we wonder, then," continued the professor, "if great things are accomplished by minute doses of nux vomica or aconite? Why should we wonder if your complaint yields to small doses of arsenicum and sulphur, such as you are to take from these tumblers?"

Well, on reflection, these things were certainly not more wonderful than the other.

"At the same time," said Professor Frittlit, "the minuteness of the doses makes them, of course, very liable to be neutralized by other substances taken into the stomach. To give them fair play, your diet must be very carefully regulated."

This announcement was by no means so palatable to the baronet. He looked as if this was likely to interfere very much with his opinion of the system. But after some little grumbling and hesitation, he consented to abide by Professor Frittlit's régime—to wit, an early dinner, light but nourishing, with one glass of white wine (or two at most) along with it, and none at all after it; exercise every forenoon; a tea-spoonful of tinctured water at the appointed intervals; and no supper. It was very dreadful: but Professor Frittlit

would take up the case on no other condition, and the baronet had to submit.

The effect was soon apparent. In a few weeks Sir Charles began to look and to feel himself a different man: his spirits became more buoyant; his eyes became less painfully sensitive to light; his digestion improved; and his gout altogether left him. He was astonished. He was delighted. He took the teaspoonful of water out of the magic tumblers every four hours exactly with religious punctuality. He thanked his sister afresh every time she called to see him, for having been the means of introducing him to this admirable system. He ordered a copy of the life of Hahnemann, the discoverer of the homœopathic law; and got Miss Montalvan and Mary to take turn about in reading it to him aloud. He subscribed to the *Homœopathic Journal*; he purchased books on the subject; he recommended the system to his friends, and told them that he had "found the true remedy for his complaint at last." Mesmerism was a piece of mummery. The water treatment was pretty well in its own way. But homœopathy was the real thing—the true comprehensive system of therapeutics. Hahnemann was one of the greatest discoverers the world had ever seen: and Professor Titus Frittlit was fitted, if people only knew it, to be a blessing to his day and generation. This was the baronet's new creed.

In the meantime numerous and somewhat important letters had been coming from Scutari. First, there came one from Major Brooks, announcing that Gilbert was at his house; that he was doing well; and

that Sir Charles might rest assured that everything that could be done would be done for the gallant invalid. The major added that he was only too happy to have this opportunity of reviving correspondence with his old school-fellow; and that he and his wife and daughter were proud of the opportunity of showing any attention to one who had taken part in the Balaklava charge.

"There now," cried Mary, clapping her hands, "that's complete—that's romantic. Depend upon it, Gilbert will fall in love with the major's daughter."

Another letter came the week following to Mary. The envelope had been addressed by a lady.

Mary had not got half through it before she laughed merrily, and cried out, "Now, I told you how it would be."

"What now?" asked the baronet.

"He has fallen in love already with the major's daughter," replied Mary, laughing again. "Listen to this. Just fancy Gilbert writing it!" And glancing back to find the place to begin at, Mary read—

"It hasn't been all suffering with me, I assure you. Through the very worst of it I have had the sweetest of sweet company. The loveliest face that I have ever seen has smiled upon me. The divinest eyes that heaven has ever filled with its own light, have beamed upon me night and day while I lay helpless here."

"And here again, at the end of the letter," continued Mary eagerly, "where he says that he wishes he could have me with him to talk about home, he

says—'but one sweet comforter is with me, night and day, and this is an unspeakable solace.'"

"Night and day!" exclaimed Sir Charles dubiously. "Upon my word, that's pretty well for a fellow that hasn't known the girl ten days!"

And now scarcely a letter came from Gilbert that did not contain some reference to this sweet comforter.

"I hope the sweet comforter's name is Edith," said Mary. "I do like beautiful names, and names that suit. Don't you? Edith would be just the name for Miss Brooks. I wonder why Gilbert has never mentioned it."

"He is mysterious," said Miss Montalvan.

"O, I hope it isn't an ugly name," cried Mary. "Fancy 'Robotham!' Miss Pipsley's name is Robotham—out of the Old Testament somewhere. O, if it's Robotham I shall scream."

Mary was relieved from this disagreeable necessity. Gilbert, in one of his letters sometime after, when he was so far recovered as to think of, by and by, undertaking the voyage home, spoke with playful affection of his "pretty little Fanny."—"I want," he said, "to bring her home with me; but I haven't spoken to Mrs. Brooks yet. I doubt if she would be disposed to part with her little pet."

The young ladies looked at one another and laughed. The old baronet was equally surprised, but by no means so pleased.

"Confound the fellow, what does he mean by all this hurry?" he exclaimed with some degree of asperity.

"O, I think it's delightful," said Mary. "The

romance of it! You should think of the romance, papa. Romance doesn't go by the rule of three, you know."

"Apparently not," growled the baronet. "It has contented itself with the rule of two, this time at least. But I don't like this. It's too precipitate. Why couldn't he have invited Miss Brooks to pay us a visit, till he saw how we liked her first."

"How we liked her!" exclaimed Mary archly. "Why, papa, what has our liking to do with it, if Gilbert likes her."

"But why so rash? He might at least have consulted his father."

"Now tell us, papa," said Mary, "did *you* do that?"

This was rather a home thrust; for Sir Charles had run off with Mary's mother from a boarding-school, without consulting either his own father or the lady's father, or anybody except the lady herself. So the baronet could do nothing but rub his chin, and smile at the recollection of his own pluck; and tell Mary that it was very improper to speak to her father in that way.

"Oh, never fear," said Miss Montalvan. "We shall be sure to like Miss Brooks. Think of her devotion to Gilbert through all this dreary time. I love her already."

"So do I, dearly," cried Mary.

"Of course, of course," growled the baronet mildly. "All I mean is that he need not have been in such a confounded hurry as to bring her home with him. That's all. But I have no doubt she is a very suitable

and proper person. Brooks comes of a good family. His mother was sister to the Marquis of Norham, and someway related, I think, to the Rieveland family. Turn up *Debrett*, Mary, and look."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE NEW REMEDY IS WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES, AND FOUND WANTING.

TIME wore on, and preparations were now made for returning to Dunvarlich, in order that they might all be settled comfortably at home before Gilbert arrived—with or without Miss Brooks. Sir Charles took care before leaving Edinburgh to provide himself with the best handbooks of domestic practice in homœopathy, and a box of homœopathic medicines, consisting of diminutive white globules, put up in tiny little glass vials, and arranged in a handy box about the size of an ordinary cigar-case.

The day after their return to Dunvarlich, a description of this remarkable box was communicated to the servants by M'Lodde, who had seen the baronet using it; but fuller particulars were subsequently supplied by the observant Fobbles.

"It don't appear," he said, "to be an expensive system—this hommy-apothecary. Ten shillings for a box o' medicines as lasts for hever—eighteenpence for a small book as tells you wot's wot, and wot you've got to do—and there you are, a regular hommy-apo-

thecary out-and-out, with your shop in yer waistcoat pocket."

"Wot's equally important," continued Fobbles, "is this. There's 'only the 'undred thousand millionth part of a drop of the tinker in 'every dose; so a fellah could tuck in the whole boxful o' medicines, and afterwards eat the box if he 'ad a mind to, without bein' none the wuss. Wot's the consequence? Why, if you give the correct medicine, it's all right; and if you don't, there aint no 'arm. 'Pon my word, I've a mind to set up in the hommy-apothecary line myself. Marry and settle down in the back-kitchen—eh, Lizzie?" and Fobbles nudged the little servant-maid, who immediately blushed, pouted, and slapped Fobbles' arm away.

"Well, well, Liz-zie," said Fobbles; "if you won't have me, I must make a hoffer to Mrs. Caie, who would be a better bargain, takin' 'er hall in hall, being four times your dimensions, not to allude to her experience, 'arf a dozen silver spoons, and other private wally-ables."

Next morning Fobbles, who had been attending on the baronet, came running down to the kitchen with something in a little bit of paper.

"Hey, look 'ear!" he cried in a subdued tone of excitement; "I've bagged one of the hommy-apothecary medicines."

The servants gathered one by one round him, as he began cautiously to unfold the paper.

"Now, look out, Lizzie. See it don't fall and crush yer feet. Hold hard. Why," he said, with a sudden

collapse, as he opened the paper and saw nothing in it—"blowed if the thing hasn't—oh no, here it is!" and he touched with the back of his nail a little white globule that had disappeared for a moment in a crease of the paper.

"What's that?" said the cook.

"That's a dose of hommy-apothecary," replied Fobbles, with an internal chuckle.

"You dinna' say Sir Chairles taks a wee feckless thing lik' that."

"Take it! You should just see him, as solemn as a judge, a putting it on his tongue, and washing it down with a gulp of water. It's the richest sight hiver I seed. You should a' seen him, though, last night—my high, but I was near a-bustin'!—Blow'd if the thing didn't slip out atween his fingers, and he took a gulp, and didn't know it was stickin' outside his lip all the time; and by and by he said he felt a heap easier, and how that wos the true thing for gout!" And Fobbles, excited by his lively recollection of the circumstance, went into a fit of laughter; and nudged the little servant girl again.

Sir Charles, having always looked upon the irksome dietetic regulations imposed upon him by Professor Frittlit as a defect in that gentleman's system, dispensed with them on his return to Dunvarlich, but betook himself with all the more scrupulous regularity to his little medicine-box. Nor did he confine the operation of the new system to himself, but began to extend its blessings over the whole household. Whenever headache, toothache, rheumatism, or any other

complaint, was heard of in the Castle, Sir Charles would send for the person afflicted, and make him enumerate the symptoms of his complaint. Having got these, Sir Charles would consult his Manuals, administer to the sufferer a homœopathic dose of something, and send him away with four or five little globules barely discernible with the naked eye, in a bit of paper, with injunctions that they should be taken, at intervals of so many hours, one at a time, in a table-spoonful of water.

There came a day, however, when the baronet's faith in the new system was to be shaken. It reached his ears one morning that Mrs. Caie had been rather unwell through the night, and was keeping her bed. Unwell! Why had he not been told sooner? Jenny was immediately despatched by the baronet to ascertain precisely what Mrs. Caie felt wrong with her. The intelligence brought back was that Mrs. Caie said she felt "a pain in her inside." The baronet looked dubious. This was rather a vague and unscientific description. However, he consulted his Manuals. He searched for some time, but in vain. He looked at the indexes. "Pain?" "Inside?" No; there was no disorder referred to in any of them under that title. He considered for some time what Mrs. Caie's complaint was likely to be. He looked over the indexes again. Could it be cramp in the stomach? or inflammation? or flatulence? or colic? Sir Charles put on his blue glasses, and read what the books said about each complaint, with its various forms and numberless symptoms, till his eyes began to ache, and his brain

grew bewildered. He saw it stated, however, that pressure on the stomach would intensify the pain in inflammation, but soothe it in colic. This would throw some light on the subject. Jenny was accordingly despatched to make the experiment. She returned, after a considerable interval, with the intelligence that Mrs. Caie thought pressure rather relieved her if anything. Quite so: then it couldn't be inflammation. It was probably colic. The baronet put on his glasses again, and reconsulted the manuals. But the remedies for colic depended upon its particular form; and here the difficulty of identification turned out to be as great as in the earlier stage. "*Nux vomica* for hæmorrhoidal colic." What sort of colic was that, Sir Charles wondered. He didn't remember to have heard of it before. But *nux vomica* was also recommended for flatulence, and for cramp in the stomach. The chances were therefore in favour of *nux*; and a globule of *nux* was at once sent and administered in a table-spoonful of water to Mrs. Caie. An hour passed, but Mrs. Caie was no better. Another globule of *nux* was administered; another hour elapsed; but still there was no sign of improvement. This wouldn't do. The baronet again put on his blue spectacles; overhauled the Manuals once more; and found chamomilla recommended in almost as many cases as *nux*. A globule of it was sent on trial; and in half-an-hour Jenny made her appearance with the gratifying intelligence that the pain was gone, and that Mrs. Caie felt so much better that she was thinking of getting up. The baronet was delighted.

A perfect cure in half-an-hour! There was the effect of a true system. He took his pencil, and jotted down on the fly-leaf of one of the manuals,—“Chamomilla, the specific for what is vulgarly called ‘pain in the inside.’”

Next morning word was brought him that Mrs. Caie had been again attacked by the same disorder. All right. Sir Charles got his box, and instantly sent up a globule of chamomilla. An hour passed; no relief. Another globule of the same. Still no relief. This was not what Sir Charles had expected. He referred once more to the book, and tried something else. The pain, however, continued for about the same time as on the previous day, and then abated. Sir Charles turned this over in his mind. Grave doubts began to take possession of him. He had been attributing to chamomilla what an accident now showed to be simply the work of nature. Could it be possible that his whole faith in the new system was based on similar mistakes? The baronet knit his brows sullenly, closed the handbooks, and took off his spectacles.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MAGNUS TRIUMPHUS.

ALL medical speculations were thrown to the winds for a time when a note arrived from Gilbert, announcing that he had reached London, and would be home in the beginning of the week. He had evidently

not brought Miss Brooks, or he would have mentioned it. Gilbert's rooms were made ready, and the Castle was all astir. New dresses, a special gift in honour of their young master's return, had been ordered for all the servants, including new and gorgeous liveries for the groom, coachman, M'Lodle and Fobbles. This last-mentioned functionary was now sent south to attend Gilbert on his journey home. At last the day arrived. From morning till evening the pony and spring-cart had been making the round of the cottars' houses, with beef, ham, poultry, cheese, and all sorts of luxuries, to enable them to make merry on the night of the young heir of Dunvarlich's return. Evening came. Sir Charles, though very weak, insisted on going to meet his son; so he and the young ladies got into the carriage together.

The train was due at seven; and as the news had got abroad, a large crowd had collected at the station, to give a welcome to the soldier from their own quarter who had ridden with the gallant six hundred.

The arrival of the train, and the apparition of Fobbles' head at one of the windows, indicating that the captain had come, was the signal for a loud and prolonged cheer. The appearance of Gilbert himself when he stepped out upon the platform, with his wounded arm in a sling, called forth a fresh burst of enthusiasm; and cries of "Three cheers for Captain Macdonald—hurrah!"—"Balaklava!"—"The Light Brigade!"—"Again!" elicited cheer after cheer, as Gilbert, who was quite unprepared for such a demonstration, made his way to the carriage, passing a cor-

dial word with each of the friends who had pressed to the front to grasp his hand as he passed. The old baronet heard the cheers, and a flush of pride came into his face. Bending forward in the carriage with his shade over his eyes, he could not at first distinguish his son; but when Gilbert reached the carriage-door, the old man grasped his hand—the left hand, the only one Gilbert could now give—and wringing it with unspeakable joy and pride, he said, in a broken voice, “Welcome home, my brave boy—welcome home—God bless you!”

The meeting with Miss Montalvan and Mary was of a more demonstrative kind; and when the carriage, followed by the acclamations of the crowd, had driven away from the station, Mary must have a kiss, and Evelyn must take one whether she would or no.

“But Fanny! where is she?” cried Mary. “Haven’t you brought her with you?”

“No. Mrs. Brooks couldn’t think of parting with her,” Gilbert said.

“We were going to have given her such a welcome,” said Miss Montalvan.

“Had rooms ready for her, and all,” added Mary.

Gilbert stared. “Rooms! For whom?”

“O! O! For whom? What charming innocence! Come; what would Miss Fanny Brooks say if she heard that?”

Gilbert looked, with open face, from the one to the other, as if he would be delighted to laugh the moment he could see the joke. And at last he saw it, evi-

dently; for he did laugh then—laugh with a bursting heartiness and infinite zest that quite startled them. But surely Gilbert had been very obtuse at first. What could be the meaning of it?

On they drove up the Dunvarlich road, delighted to be all together again, and as merry as could be.

Every cottage along the road was illuminated in such rude, simple fashion as the windows allowed; and the cottagers were all out waiting at their doors to give them a welcome and a cheer as they passed. The old baronet asked on each occasion who those were that gave that last cheer. He seemed to have a kind thought for everyone that night, and felt far prouder of the honour done to his son than he would have been had he been himself created a duke.

A huge bonfire, that blazed on the hill-top behind the Castle, threw a fitful light along the road; there was a little crowd, full of enthusiasm, waiting at the porter's lodge; all the windows of the Castle were brilliantly lighted; and when the carriage dashed up to the door and stopped, there were the servants, all in their gayest attire, drawn up in the hall, under the supreme command of Mrs. Caie, to give the captain a welcome.

The night was one of merriment and festivity above and below. Even the old baronet, though he bemoaned his hard fate in being scarcely able to see the bright faces that gathered round the table, forgot his pain, and looked proud and happy. There were a hundred things to be talked about; a hundred stories to be told; and the young ladies found an ex-

haustless source of delight in quizzing Gilbert about his "sweet comforter."

What is she like? Is she tall or short? Is she dark or fair? Is she clever? Is she frank? Come, tell us something about her.

Gilbert was provokingly reticent.

"Have you brought her likeness?"

Gilbert smiled. "Suppose I have?"

"O, you have, now. I know you have. Come, where is it? Have you it upon you? O Gilbert, show it me. You must show it me. I shall die if you don't show it me."

Mary was going to make a dash into Gilbert's pockets; but he laughingly caught her arms, and would not let her.

"Come, Evy, help me; we must get it from him. I am sure he has it upon him somewhere. Gilbert, you provoking fellow, why don't you let us see it!"

Miss Montalvan's eye caught sight of a locket dangling at the end of Gilbert's watch-guard. She looked at Gilbert, and smiled knowingly, as much as to say that she guessed where it was.

"Gilbert, you provoking fellow," cried Mary, "why can't you let us see it. She's ugly. That's it. Now I know. You dare not show it us. She is a fright."

But the captain only laughed, and was as invulnerable to banter as to entreaty.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE BARONET IS INFORMED OF THE REAL CAUSE OF HIS AILMENTS NOW, AND PUT UNDER PROPER AND VIGOROUS TREATMENT.

WHETHER or not Sir Charles, in his joy at Gilbert's return, had indulged in even more than his ordinary "glass," it happened that, about three in the morning, he was seized with a sudden and violent attack of his old complaint, which was like to have made an end of him altogether. For hours in succession he suffered excruciating pain, which abated at intervals only to return again with twofold severity. Dr. Sutherland was in Edinburgh at the time; and from the baronet's temper and obstinacy—which became intolerable when he was enduring pain—it is probable that he would have refused to let Dr. Sutherland be called, even had he been at hand. Gilbert, however, insisted on having some medical man called; and Sir Charles, finding himself getting worse and worse, reluctantly consented.

In the course of a few hours, Dr. Slochel, an allopathic physician of extensive practice in Perth, made his appearance. Dr. Slochel was a big, pompous man, with a large mouth, a heavy double-chin, and a pimply nose, that looked as if it were familiar with the smell of whisky-toddy. He was a physician of the old school—a man who could not, and would not, be bothered with new facts and theories; hated

innovation; and expressed his wish, in stronger language than we can repeat, that scientific busybodies would let the old recognized practice alone. Dr. Slochel felt Sir Charles's pulse, looked at his tongue; and asked him where he felt pain, and what sort of pain it was.

"Ha!" he said in a loud voice, when the baronet had answered his questions, "stinging in your toe—gnawing pains in your wrists and knees—joints enlarged and swollen. I see, sir. It is a clear case of arthritis or podagra."

The poor baronet turned up his eyes to Dr. Slochel's face in horror.

"Wh—what—what do you say it is?"

"An aggravated case of podagra."

"Oh doctor, you don't say so. 'Podagra.' Is it very dangerous? What kind of disease is it?"

"You have just described its symptoms," replied Dr. Slochel. "It is a case of common podagra—what is commonly called gout."

"Gout!" exclaimed the baronet, leaning back again with an air of inexpressible relief. "Of course it is gout. I have known that for six years."

"We must speak accurately, sir," retorted the doctor.

"If you meant gout, you might have said gout," retorted the baronet.

Dr. Slochel proceeded with his examination without paying any attention to this rejoinder; and on learning that Sir Charles had been away at the Worsley baths, he broke out with great vehemence against the hydropathic system.

"It's a piece of quackery and humbug from beginning to end, sir. My only wonder is that you've come through it alive. To put a wet sheet on a man suffering from gout is sheer madness. Take my advice, sir, and confine yourself to the recognized practice. You know what you're about then."

Sir Charles admitted that he had lost faith entirely in the water treatment.

"Of course, sir," said Dr. Slochel, "everybody does who tries it. Water! Why, what in the name of goodness can water do for a diseased system? A dose of calomel or digitalis, or a good stiff tumbler of brandy-and-water, will do more for the system than all the water applications in the world."

"Then you are of opinion, doctor, that stimulants do good, medicinally?"

"Good! they are the best thing in the world, sir, when properly administered. We could want half the things in the *materia medica* sooner than alcohol. The spirit stimulates the flagging powers. It infuses strength. It aids respiratory combustion. But it must be used with discretion of course, and under proper medical advice."

Sir Charles evidently looked upon Dr. Slochel as a man of superior discernment and sagacity.

"But really," he said faintly, "you doctors differ. Why, your fellow-practitioner, Sutherland, forbade me the use of alcoholic drinks altogether."

"He did, did he?" growled Dr. Slochel, in a tone between indignation and contempt. "It's like him. *Between* you and me, sir, Sutherland is a bit of a

quack. He knows no more how to give medicine than your boy there does," and the doctor jerked his thumb towards Fobbles, who was in waiting.

"I've known him," he continued, "send patients to that cold water affair at Worsley, when all they wanted to put them right was a course of mercury or a few blisters. Why, sir, I send more custom to the druggist's in a month than Sutherland does in a year. Mr. M'Bane told me so himself."

This remark was strictly true as to the amount of business which Dr. Slochel sent to the druggist's. It was equally true of the amount he sent to the undertaker's.

"Sutherland is a pleasant enough fellow to speak to," continued Dr. Slochel; "but between you and me, sir, he is a weak, timid practitioner."

"That's pretty much my own opinion," said Sir Charles.

"Well, sir, you may thank providence that you're alive at this day," added the doctor. "If your constitution hadn't been naturally good—or if your means hadn't allowed you to enjoy a generous diet—let me tell you, sir, you wouldn't have stood half of all this quackery and nonsense."

"I can believe it," replied the baronet, as he writhed under another sting of the gout. "I have said, time and again, that if it hadn't been for my glass of wine, I should never have pulled through."

"You said right," exclaimed Dr. Slochel emphatically, "you said right. See what that nonsense has brought you to! There are your limbs almost useless."

There is your sight almost gone. Let me look at your eyes again, sir.—A little more this way to the light.—Yes; just as I thought. Sclerotica, accompanied with an erysipelatous form of inflammation of the conjunctiva. Ha! I thought it was.”

“Oh, doctor, doctor! You don’t mean that!” groaned the baronet in despair.

“It’s the plain truth, sir; and all owing to that infernal quackery to which you have been subjected.”

“Confound them all!” exclaimed the baronet indignantly. “Why, De la Douche told me it was a morbid secretion.”

“Morbid fiddlesticks! It’s your bowels. That’s the source of the whole thing. They’ve been neglected; and now your circulating, digestive, nervous, secreting organs—everything—is going to the dogs. Any man with half an eye might see that. What you need now is proper, vigorous treatment. If I had been one month later I doubt if anything could have been done. As it is, I hope to see you pretty well and off my list in six or seven weeks. Vigorous treatment, sir, vigorous treatment, that’s what you need.”

“O, I’m glad to hear you say so, doctor,” groaned the baronet. “For this is a terrible state of existence.”

Dr. Slochel lost no time in commencing his “vigorous treatment,” which was so very vigorous that, in five weeks, the poor baronet was reduced to a skeleton, and promised fair to verify Dr. Slochel’s prediction about the six or seven weeks, by getting off that functionary’s list—at the wrong end. Out of respect for the faculty, we will refrain from stating how many

nauseous powders, boxes of pills, and bottles of slimy mixtures, were sent down the poor old gentleman's throat within those five weeks. Suffice it to say that the communication between the Castle and the shop of Mr. M'Bane, the druggist, was now incessant. Dr. Slochel's system was very simple both in theory and practice. The fact was, that, being too fond of society to think of bothering himself with experiments, classification of cases, and so on, the doctor was totally at sea as to the proper and specific remedy for any complicated or unusual case of disease; and adopted the simple and easy method of giving the patient as much medicine as he thought he could stand, and cramming into his mixture-bottles as many different drugs as possible.

"For," as he used to say to himself, "when I put so many small shot into the charge, it's strange if some of them don't hit the mark."

By acting upon this very simple and ingenious principle, Dr. Slochel saved himself a vast amount of trouble, and put his weak or naturally delicate patients very speedily out of their pain. And this was what he was in a fair way of doing with the poor old baronet of Dunvarlich.

CHAPTER XXV.

SUNSHINE AND STORM.

A SAD catastrophe had, in the meantime, befallen Dr. Sutherland, from whom, during this season of trial,

Gilbert would have been sure of advice and counsel about his father. Mary and the doctor had mitigated the hardship of their separation by frequent correspondence, the nature and delight of which few will need described. As the months went by, the doctor's hopes went on brightening; his reputation increased, and with his reputation, his income. Within a twelvemonth he hoped to be able to make Mary his wife, without needing to rely in any way upon her possible dowry. "If your father gives me you, my own Mary," wrote the doctor, "we shall ask, and we shall need, nothing more."

Another bright and unexpected prospect had opened up. One of the medical professors in Edinburgh had, in consequence of his increasing infirmity, announced his intention of resigning his chair at the close of the session; and a rumour was current in medical circles, that the vacated chair would be offered to Dr. Sutherland.

"Should it be so," wrote the doctor, in confidence, to Mary, "I will accept it joyfully. A chair in the University opens up a way that I have long coveted, of influencing the young men who are to be the doctors of the next generation. Of course, the change would involve a considerable pecuniary sacrifice, as the salary is small, and the income from my practice here would cease at once, and would be but poorly compensated for by such practice as I could get, or indeed undertake, in Edinburgh—at least for two or three years. But I have saved enough now to relieve our minds from all anxiety on this score: and I have been fortunate

enough to get the whole of it invested in shares in a Glasgow bank, which pays a handsomer dividend than any other bank in Scotland that I know of. So, in any case, we shall have, I think, enough and to spare."

Such were the assurances with which the doctor cheered his affianced bride: while she cheered his heart with the still more gratifying assurance that with him she could not be otherwise than happy, if he were so. She also confided to him that, in a quiet way, she was diligently training herself for her new sphere, under the admirable superintendence of Mrs. Caie, who was a wonderful housekeeper, and who had now been admitted into her confidence.

"And as there's nobody else to tell you," wrote Mary, "what wonderful progress I am making, I must tell you myself, that I am going to be quite a *model* housekeeper. You have no idea how nicely I am getting on. If the cook were turning unwell, I should be able to cook you as nice a little dinner as you could wish (though I've heard that bachelors like you get *very particular*); and if anything went wrong with the servants, I should be able to keep the house as *trim and tidy* as a new bonnet till they were well again. Now, isn't *that* a good certificate! from myself too, though I am so *very* unassuming, as you know! I forgot to tell you that I cooked an apple-dumpling yesterday; and papa said it was the best he ever tasted, and took a second supply! Now, what do you say to that? As for tidiness, Mrs. Caie says I can see a speck of dust a mile off. And then when you are professor!—do you

know I always think of a professor as an awful being like a judge upon the bench, speaking unintelligible mysteries to a great assemblage of very learned looking-students who never get their hair cut: and I was terribly shocked once when papa pointed out to me a rakish-looking man sitting on the top of an omnibus, with *such* an old battered hat upon his head, and told me he was a Greek professor!—Well, I was saying when *you* are professor (and I'll take care you don't go out with a hat like that!) we must get the students up to tea, especially the poor fellows who study all night, and have no friends; and I shall sing and play to them, and have such a nice supper ready—oh, won't it be delightful! And I am not going to let you study too hard, mind, and hurt yourself. You must spend your evenings with me. And when you *must* be at work, you know I can help you. I can read to you, and run for your books to the library, and copy things for you, and do a hundred little things, if you only teach me. I will do everything I can,—except take your nasty medicines, and *that* I shan't and won't! I do hate them, and I will tell *the students* that—See if I don't. What will you say then, Edward? O, we shall be so happy!”

Such were the prospects with which these two fond hearts cheered one another in their separation, as the time drew nearer and nearer when their fondest hopes promised to be realized. But alas! terrible reverses were at hand.

Typhus fever broke out in Perth with great viru-

lence, especially in the poorer and more thickly populated part of the town. Devoted with enthusiasm to the duties of his profession, and full of compassion for the families into which this malignant disease was bringing suffering and death, Dr. Sutherland applied himself to the treatment of these cases, without a thought for his own comfort, and without sufficient regard to his own safety.

In consequence of his high reputation, he was sent for in almost all the worst cases, especially by the poor people, amongst whom Dr. Sutherland was as much known for his tender consideration and kindness as for his skill. That a sufferer was too poor to pay for medical attendance was one of the strongest claims that could be urged upon the kind-hearted doctor. The extraordinary number and severity of the cases of typhus that appeared week after week taxed his energies to the utmost. By night as well as by day he was at work, availing himself of such moments as he could snatch for sleep, during the brief and uncertain intervals of his exhausting labours.

His untiring exertions, his noble self-sacrifice, and the indescribable sweetness of his voice and manner, endeared him to the heart of every one. The poor could never speak of him without enthusiasm. As he went about from house to house on his unceasing mission of mercy, bearing too clearly on his own face the marks of over-taxed strength, hats were respectfully touched and curtsies dropped on every side, and you could hear the people say as they looked after him, "There goes the guid doctor—the puir bodies'

freend."—"Ah, he's a dear, kind man—God bless him!" and the like.

But a sad blow was now impending. Everybody remembers the great bank failure that took place that year in Glasgow, spreading dismay over the whole country, and plunging many thousands of well-to-do and even affluent people into poverty. Widows and orphans, who had been left comfortably provided for, found themselves suddenly destitute; good old ladies, who had been living away in quiet corners of the country on the returns from the little fortune that had been invested for them in bank-shares, found themselves suddenly stripped of their all, and thrown upon the cold charities of the world. Merchants and tradesmen, who had been able, after long and weary lives of honest industry, to retire upon their hard-earned gains, suddenly found themselves penniless; and had now, in the evening of their days, which they had hoped to spend in quiet comfort, to go back into the stormy world, and begin again the toil and drudgery of a business-life.

Amongst the many who suffered by that shameful and calamitous failure was Dr. Sutherland. His name, a week before, had been good for £4000; now it was scarcely worth the paper on which it was written. He was left penniless. His hopes were blasted. The happiness which he had striven so long and so manfully to attain, and which seemed, a day before, within his reach, was snatched away. Alas! how often, in this world of change and disappointment, we see the centennial cactus-flower, that has

taken a hundred years to blow, wither in a single night!

The despatch containing news of this catastrophe lay awaiting the doctor as he returned, jaded and weary, from his afternoon round amongst his patients. It was so new, so startling—that he could scarcely realize it. He sat down with the letter in his hand; tried to think; pressed his hand upon his head; read the letter again; and sat brooding over the disastrous news for more than half-an-hour. His dinner stood on the table untouched. And so all his plans—all his fondest hopes—were shattered at a blow! He went down upon his knees in silent prayer.

He had scarcely been a minute thus when there came a loud ring to the door. It was another call to duty. Dr. Sutherland rose, and put the note in his pocket. "The Lord gave," he said, "and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." And with a heart heavy enough, God knows, but still resigned; sorrowing most for her whom this blow would grieve so much, the doctor put on his hat, and went forth once more upon his mission of mercy.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A CHANGE.

THE blow, however, fell heavily upon his heart; and there is little doubt that it laid him all the more open to another that immediately followed. Returning

from seeing the patient to whose bedside he had been called that afternoon, he felt unwell, and was about to resort to some remedies, when another urgent call came for his attendance upon a poor woman, who stayed about three miles from Perth, and who had just been seized with symptoms of a most alarming character. The doctor forgot about himself, and at once set off. By the time he got back he felt much worse. His head was beginning to grow giddy, and he felt the fever hot upon him.

The intelligence that Dr. Sutherland had himself been attacked by the malignant disease from which he had been striving so devotedly to rescue others, spread dismay amongst his patients, and awakened profound sympathy throughout the whole town and neighbourhood. The sympathy was deepened when it was ascertained that the great bank failure, which was spreading so much desolation over the land, had involved him in its ruins.

The distressing effect of these news, when they reached Dunvarlich, may be conceived. The family were already full of anxiety about Sir Charles, who was sinking slowly day by day; and this new calamity filled their minds with the deepest gloom and apprehension. To poor Mary, of course, it was a terrible trial. The bank failure she never distressed herself about, except in so far as she feared that it would distress the doctor. Her whole anxiety was about his health. Every other feeling was swallowed up in this.

The doctor grew worse. Every day, Mary came anxiously to the door to make inquiries, and handed in a

fresh bouquet of flowers from the Castle conservatory, prepared with her own hands. She knew that they would tell the poor sufferer of the loving heart outside that was yearning over him, and would make him think with hope of the bright spring-time which was now at hand. Day after day went heavily by, till, at the close of a week of agonizing suspense, the glad news was waiting Mary one forenoon that the patient had been pronounced out of danger.

The old baronet at the Castle—wasted to death and almost blind—had heard something of all this; and one day he asked Miss Montalvan, who was sitting by his bedside alone, what the particulars were. Encouraged by the tone in which the question was put, Miss Montalvan described with all her woman's eloquence, the sad condition to which their dear old friend had been reduced. She spoke of his love for Mary, and of Mary's devotion to him; and how the doctor had laboured and saved that he might offer Mary a suitable home. She told him of his success—of his prospects of a professorship in Edinburgh—of all the bright hopes that had cheered them both. And now, she said, and a tear sprang into her eye as she said it, this double disaster had come and shattered their hopes. The poor doctor had lost everything. He had to give up all thought, in the meantime, of Mary, or of offering himself as a candidate for the professorship, on which he had set his heart. He would have to give up his carriage, would have to leave his house, and go into a poorer one. The fever had reduced him to a mere shadow: he was recovering

very slowly, and they were afraid he would never be able for his former work again.

The old baronet listened. Perhaps he felt more disposed to cherish kindly thoughts, and make his peace with all around him, now that the apprehension had begun to come like a shadow over him, that his end might be drawing nigh. His look, at any rate, as he listened to the narrative of Dr. Sutherland's misfortunes, had much in it of sorrow and compassion. Now and then, as the young and ardent girl beside him went on with her story, the baronet would exclaim faintly—"Poor fellow!—poor fellow!" Miss Montalvan took this as a good sign, and did not fail to gladden Mary's heart that night with her account of the interview.

The truth was that the picture of his old friend's misfortunes had wrought on the baronet in a way that remonstrance and entreaty had failed to do, when the doctor was in the full tide of prosperity. His heart was changed. He thought of the delightful intercourse there used to be between them—how the doctor had been like a brother to Gilbert—and how he had, after all, been the kindest, most attentive, and most trustworthy of all his medical attendants. He felt as if he would like to see those old days brought back again.

There was still another thought in his mind. During his severe illness he had begun to think that Dr. Sutherland might perhaps be right in regard to the secret of his complaint. Professor Frittlit had allowed him no wine to speak of; Dr. De la Douche had allowed him no wine at all; and so long as he had been under

their régime, he had felt himself better than he ever did at home, even when using the wet sheet or the homœopathic globules. This was a curious fact. It had forced itself on his mind more than once before, but he now began to think seriously of it, and reflect on its significance. Perhaps Dr. Sutherland was right after all. At any rate he had been honest. "And if he had not really believed wine to be the cause of my disorder," reflected the baronet, "he would not have said it so often, to his own cost."

As these thoughts passed through the old baronet's mind, he felt a qualm of conscience. He felt—all the more keenly now when there was a danger of his never seeing his old friend again—that he had been harsh and severe to him.

Well; there might be time yet to make amends in. Next day, when the young ladies were both beside him, he asked Miss Montalvan to go into the next room and play him a tune: Mary could stay. Miss Montalvan obeyed with alacrity, giving an arch look at Mary as she passed. She evidently guessed that there was something else that Sir Charles wanted besides a tune on the piano.

She was right. No sooner was she heard playing in the next room, than Sir Charles said—

"Mary, bring your chair nearer to me. I have something to ask you."

When she had done as he wanted her, he resumed in a grave voice—

"Suppose that I were giving you five thousand pounds, Mary, what would you do with it?"

Mary stared, looked puzzled, suddenly guessed his meaning, and blushed deeply.

"Come, what would you do with it?" repeated the baronet.

Mary remained silent with her eyes cast down, and a smile twinkling at the corners of her mouth.

"I see," resumed the old man after a pause, "I must put the question in a different form. Suppose, then, I were offering you five thousand pounds on condition you kept it to yourself, and didn't give it to any person, or persons, who might be in want of it, what would you say?"

"I would beg of you to keep it, papa," she answered, still looking down and blushing through her smiles.

"Then that won't do," said the baronet.

After a pause he turned his bleared face more towards her and said, "Now Mary, my love, come and be confidential like a good girl, and tell me all this about Sutherland."

Mary hesitated; but, by dint of questioning, the old gentleman elicited all about her engagement with the doctor, and the difficulties that were now in the way, and would be in the way for many years, she thought, even after the doctor was quite well again. But she didn't mind if Edward didn't. She could wait. And as for wealth she didn't care for it. She would be quite contented and happy in any sort of home that he could take her to.

"Now Mary, my dear," said the old baronet, "I'll tell you what I have made up my mind should be done. I meant to leave you ten thousand pounds;

but, instead of that I shall make it five thousand, and give you the other five now; and you will give it, in your own way, to Sutherland; and tell him, in your own way, that I will never consent to your marriage unless he takes the money and accepts the Edinburgh professorship. And if that won't do, then tell him that if he doesn't take it, you won't take him. As of course, in that case, you won't,—eh?"

And the poor old baronet turned his half blind eyes towards Mary, and smiled faintly at his own fun.

"And in the meantime," he said, "you will tell John to drive in to Perth this afternoon, and leave my card at Sutherland's house, and bring me word how he is."

Need I describe how the grateful and happy girl, in a transport of joy, kissed and thanked her father again and again, with a thousand demonstrations of gratitude and delight. Or how she ran into the next room, and threw her arms round Miss Montalvan's neck, and told her, in eager whispers, what her father had said, and what he had told her to do. Or need it be stated, that along with the card which John conveyed to the doctor's house that afternoon, there went a deliciously fragrant little note of a still more explicit and endearing description.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SIR CHARLES GETS ROUND THE BUSH AT LAST.

DR. SUTHERLAND became rapidly convalescent. Gilbert was in the habit of going to Perth almost every

day to see his old friend, and bear him company. He was delighted beyond measure at the reconciliation now practically effected between his friend and his father. So soon as the doctor was well enough to leave the house, Gilbert and the young ladies drove in for him, and took him out to spend the day at Dunvarlich, and feel the fresh breeze upon his face once more.

He was much shocked to see the state of physical prostration to which Sir Charles was reduced; and Sir Charles, had he been less blind, would have been equally startled to see the sad change that the fever had made upon the doctor. Both of them were overjoyed at the meeting; and not a word was said from which any one could have inferred that there had ever been any alienation between them.

"You must come out to Dunvarlich, and drive about as much as you can," said Sir Charles, "and get back your strength and your good looks again." The doctor took the hint, and confessed to Mary that it was the most delightful prescription he ever got or ever gave.

Mary had succeeded with no little difficulty in getting him to promise to make use of the five thousand pounds, as he might need it. The first time the doctor found himself alone with Sir Charles, he thanked him, in a way that quite exhilarated the old baronet's heart, for the generosity that had enabled him to retrieve his fortunes, at a moment when all seemed lost.

"But I," said the baronet "have a favour to ask

of you in return. And that is that you come and be my doctor again. I have already settled Slochel's account, and am done with him. If that man is a true practitioner of medicine, then allow me to say, without meaning offence, that medicine is nothing more nor less than a system of licensed homicide. Some day I'll just show you one or two of his prescriptions, and some specimens of the infernal mixtures he wanted me to pour down my throat. Gilbert wouldn't let me take them, and had quite a *fracas* with Slochel one day about them. Now, Sutherland, you'll take my case up again, and prescribe something. Try, for God's sake, to get me back to what I was. This sort of existence is really not worth calling life."

The poor debilitated baronet, as he paused to take breath, moved himself uneasily upon his couch.

Dr. Sutherland looked troubled.

"You know my desire to see you in health," he replied. "But where is the use of prescribing, if you will not follow my prescription?"

Sir Charles's face darkened for a moment. He knew what the doctor meant. After a few moments' awkward pause, he said—

"Well, Sutherland, let us speak plainly, and understand one another. You really think that wine has been the cause of my illness?"

"I do, sir," replied the doctor firmly. "My duty as your medical adviser compelled me to say so before, and my anxiety to see you well again makes me repeat it now."

"Then what would you advise?"

"Simply what I advised before. Abstinence from all stimulants—a nourishing diet—and, so soon as you are able for it, plenty of exercise."

"Well, doctor," said Sir Charles, after a pause, "You may be right, or you may be wrong. But I will give your régime a fair trial."

The doctor looked at him, and grasped his hand. "Do so, my dear sir," he said, "and you will soon be yourself again."

And so at last the matter was settled.

Sir Charles then gave the doctor some account of the various kinds of treatment that had been tried upon him by the successive practitioners to whom he had submitted his case.

"My dear Sutherland," he added, with a dismal shake of his head, "You have no conception how much I have suffered from the bungling of these quacks."

"Well," said the doctor gently, "they were off the scent, no doubt, but I wouldn't call them quacks."

"Not quacks! What then? Vampires? Thugs? I would call that Slochel a Thug, and I wouldn't mind a bit though he heard me."

The doctor laughed, and said,

"What I meant was that these different systems are not mere quackery, though they were certainly not what you needed. The fault lies in men taking separate curative principles and riding them to death. A man finds that a particular kind of treatment is applicable to certain cases, and so he thinks it must be applicable to all. That's the mistake. But

each system has its own share of truth. I have seen homœopathy effect remarkable cures. So with hydro-pathy. So with severe drugs. I have seen even mesmerism employed with great advantage. In fact, I have recommended it more than once to patients of my own. But in your case, where illness was the result of a thing that you were continuing to use every day, what could you expect, so long as that cause was let alone? The very best treatment would fail in such a case. Therapeutics"——

"Stop! stop there!" interrupted the baronet in as near an approach to shouting as he was capable of. "You'll have me in amongst the podagras and morbid secretions next, if you get upon that tack. No, no, I have had enough of that sort of thing. You put me upon my legs again, Sutherland, and then we can have a quiet talk about therapeutics."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEREIN A GOOD STEP IS NOT TAKEN.

CAMPBELL, the engine-driver, now a thoroughly steady and well-behaved man, had taken a great interest in the mission presided over by the reverend gentleman who had been the means of inducing him to sign the twelve-month's engagement to abstain. Funds had been collected; a neat chapel had been built; the people who attended the meetings were now congregated into a

church; Campbell had been chosen one of the elders; and the new congregation had moderated in a call to Mr. Mitchell. The day for ordination was fixed, and a committee had been appointed to make arrangements for the ordination dinner.

It was just at this time that the term of Campbell's agreement with Mr. Mitchell expired. Two or three days before its expiration, Campbell called upon his minister, and thanked him for having been the means of making him a steadier and a happier man; and he announced himself willing now, if Mr. Mitchell pleased, to go with him and join the Temperance Society. Mr. Mitchell was very much gratified. On mention being made, however, of going and joining the society, he looked a little perplexed, and deliberated with himself for a few moments.

"I mean," he said at last, "to get up a Temperance Society in connection with our own church, Mr. Campbell, so soon as we've got fairly into working order. So I think it is scarcely worth our while joining the other for so short a time."

Of course Campbell was glad to fall in with any arrangement most agreeable to his minister. And so the old pledge was allowed to run out, and the new one was not taken. But so soon as preliminaries connected with the new church were over, of course it would be.

The truth, however, must be told. Mr. Mitchell had, in his own mind, another reason for desiring delay. The arrangements for the ordination dinner had been made; toasts were to be drunk; and his own

health, of course, would be the toast of the evening. Now Mr. Mitchell was a man of delicate feelings. He was firm and decided enough when the way of duty was clear. But to make himself singular, when there was no necessity for it, and especially when his singularity would be offensive to others, was a thing from which he shrunk. There was no need for precipitation in this matter: he could take the step just as well after the ordination as before it. How excessively awkward his position would be, at his own ordination dinner, if he had to refuse to drink the toasts! It would be offensive: it would be like casting a reflection on those who did. Moreover, it was the custom to have toasts on these occasions. It was the regular thing. Ah, these customs, how much they have to answer for! Or rather they who *make* the customs, and of whom you, dear reader, are one. By your daily practice you are either forging another link of the chain wherewith your children shall be bound, or else forging a hammer wherewith these fetters may be broken and your children set free. What thou sowest, that shalt thou and thy children reap.

However, it was the custom, Mr. Mitchell thought, and it was better not to be singular. The ordination once over, then the way would be clear. And so the pledge-taking was postponed, and the arrangements for the dinner went on.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SURPRISE. THE PLOT THICKENS.

It was either on the same day, or the one following, that an old white-headed man came up to the porter's lodge at Dunvarlich, and asked if Miss Montalvan was at home. No, the porter said, she had just gone out for a ride, and would not be back till the afternoon. The old man then drew a letter from his pocket, and asked the porter respectfully if he would give it into Miss Montalvan's own hands. The porter promised that he would, and the old man went away.

When Miss Montalvan returned, and the porter went out to open the gate, he handed her the note, and told her how he had come by it.

"Did you know the old man?" she asked.

"No; I have never seen him before. He is a stranger, I think. At any rate, he has an English tongue in his head."

"What was his appearance?" she asked, as she broke open the note.

"He looked like an old sailor. A decent, gray-headed, weather-beaten old man. Walked with the help of a staff."

Miss Montalvan glanced over the note. It was written in a somewhat shaky hand, and ran as follows:—

"Dear and honerd Lady—I have somewhat of importance to tell you of, which concerns you and the

honourable family you stays with. Will your ladyship condescend to see me for a half-hour or so? If you can make it convenient to call at Mr. Grant's Hotel in Perth to-morrow afternoon at four, or between four and five, your ladyship will find me there. If it was not an important thing as I had to tell you of, honerd miss, I would not make bold to ask so much of you. This is private. From your very humble, obedient servant,
(Signed) HARRY SWOBS."

Like most young ladies, Miss Montalvan was curious and fond of romance; and with a smile of tickled curiosity, as she cantered up the avenue, she resolved to go. Harm she never dreamt of. She was well known in Perth, and Grant's Hotel was a very respectable one. She knew it.

Accordingly, next day, making some excuse to Mary, she drove in to Perth, and telling the coachman to put up at the stables till she sent for him, she walked on to Grant's. On entering she asked the barmaid if there was an old gentleman, a Mr. Swobs, staying there at present. The barmaid immediately summoned a chamber-maid, who curtsied and conducted Miss Montalvan upstairs, and along a passage that looked so gloomy in the dusk of the afternoon, that Miss Montalvan had almost stopped to consider whether she ought to go further. It was only for a moment; and then, smiling at her foolish fears, she went on.

She was shown into a neat sitting-room in which a fire was burning. Here the maid left her, saying that

Mr. Swobs was in the smoking-room, and she would let him know. When Miss Montalvan found herself left there alone, she began to feel a little nervous: the circumstances were so strange and the place so silent and lonely. After a glance round the room, which seemed to lead into another, the door of which stood a little way open, she stepped to the window. It looked down upon a row of empty stables and a silent yard, in which an old stage-coach was going to decay.

She was still looking out when, with a start, she heard a firm step on the floor behind her. The door had not opened. It was some one from the inner room. She turned hastily, and found herself in the presence of Fowler.

The blood went back to her heart. In a moment, however, she recovered herself; and drawing herself proudly up, her eyes flashing indignation at Fowler, she moved towards the door. Fowler put out his arm to intercept her.

"Evelyn,—" he began.

"Sir, move aside!" she said indignantly. "I will not remain here. I have been grossly imposed upon. Sir, let me go!"

There was a royal dignity in the girl's voice and attitude that awed even Fowler; but he still stood between her and the door.

"Hear me, Evelyn!" he said, in a low, quick, earnest voice. "You are mistaken. You have nothing to fear. I shall not lay a finger on you. I swear it. O Evelyn, if you knew my heart you would not think so ill of me."

"There has been no imposition," he continued. "None, I assure you. I am here to tell you something seriously affecting not only yourself, but those at the Castle. If you refuse to hear me, you will bring upon your friends there a ruin which I only can avert. Their fates are now in my hand. Will you listen?"

She stood looking full at him with her dark majestic eyes. He had impressed her by the earnestness with which he spoke. She said nothing; but her curiosity was evidently excited.

A step was heard in the passage. Fowler turned his head quickly, as if to listen, and his brow darkened suddenly.

"Is *he* here?" he said fiercely. "Have you brought *him*? Beware! his blood shall be on his own head if he tampers with me again." Fowler had drawn a double-barrelled pistol from his pocket, and turned with a menacing look towards the door. It was opened a little bit, and an old weather-beaten face made its appearance.

"O, it's you, Swobs," said Fowler, recovering his calmness instantly; "shut the door, and wait outside till I call for you."

The old man glanced at Miss Montalvan and withdrew, shutting the door after him.

"That's the man who wrote you," said Fowler, turning to Miss Montalvan again, and laying the pistol on the table near him. "He is part of my evidence. Are you prepared to hear me?"

Still looking at him proudly, she assented by a

slight inclination of the head. Fowler evidently felt the cold haughtiness of her manner.

"O Evelyn!" he exclaimed with sudden emotion; "you would not look on me like that if you but knew the love I bear you,—if you knew the sacrifices I am willing to make—the sacrifices I have come to make, for you! You would give me at least one look, one word, one smile, such as you used to give in old days, Evelyn!"

"Old days!" she exclaimed, in a voice that showed how deeply her own feelings were being agitated. "Fowler, will you dare to speak of the past, and expect me to look upon you without repugnance? Enough of this. If you have anything to say, say it, and let me go."

Fowler watched her with compressed lips, round which a dark and sinister smile began to spread. "Well," he said, "I will say it; and perhaps when I have said it, we shall see some change."

He put his hand into his breast-pocket, and drew forth a pocket-book.

"You are aware, Miss Montalvan," he began, with ominous calmness, "that Sir Charles and I are half-brothers,—in other words, that old Sir Gilbert was my father as well as his?"

She knew it.

"You are aware," continued Fowler, "that Sir Gilbert's first wife had been a Mrs. Montgomery."

She knew that also.

"And you are aware, of course, that if the present Sir Charles Macdonald, the sole issue of that marriage,

could be shown to be illegitimate, the baronetcy and estate of Dunvarlich would no longer be his."

Fowler paused, looking at her.

"But you were not aware," he said, and the sinister smile crept into his face again, "that this *can* be shown. It is a fact. Sir Charles Macdonald of Dunvarlich is an illegitimate son."

Miss Montalvan's eyes flashed with indignation.

"Nay, be calm and listen," said Fowler. "Reserve your wrath till you see whether I am right or wrong. I have evidence enough here, I think, to satisfy your mind on that point."

He spoke with calm assurance, and smiled.

"Yes," he said, "you knew that Sir Charles's mother was a Mrs. Montgomery; but you didn't know that when Mrs. Montgomery married Sir Gilbert, her first husband was alive—that the old man in the lobby there travelled across Africa with him—travelled with him for months after his wife had become Lady Macdonald—and that I have in this book a letter actually written by her first husband after Sir Charles was born! You didn't know that, Miss Montalvan."

"I did not," she replied firmly, "nor do I believe it now."

"Well, I don't wonder at it," said Fowler, carelessly. "I didn't believe it myself at first. It seemed too good to be true. But if you doubt my word, you can have the evidence of your senses. You know the date of Sir Charles's birth. The century and he were born together, January First, 1800. I suppose you have heard that a score of times at the Castle."

She knew it.

"Now then," said Fowler, "examine this letter," and he smiled grimly as he selected one from the pocket-book.

"But first," he said, checking his hand—"promise me, on your honour, that you will give it me back so soon as you have read it."

She gave the promise carelessly, and took the letter. Her colour changed a little when she looked at it. It was Captain Montgomery's writing beyond all doubt. That strange letter of his in the Album at Dunvarlich, which she had read a hundred times, had made her as familiar with Captain Montgomery's handwriting as with her own. The date was written out in full in the captain's hand—"February the Twelfth Eighteen Hundred." The post-marks were on it too, admitting no possibility of mistake.

As she slowly handed the letter back, she looked into Fowler's eyes with an expression in which firmness was beginning to be strangely mingled with misgiving and fear.

"Fowler," she said at length with as much calmness as she could command, "do you credit all this? Do you believe in your own heart what you now wish *me* to believe?"

"I do."

"Before God you do?" asked Miss Montalvan.

"Before God," repeated Fowler solemnly.

She looked thoughtfully at him for a few moments with a troubled countenance, on which the feelings she was trying to suppress betrayed themselves by

a fitting shadow and a momentary quivering of the lip.

"Then what is the meaning of all this?" she asked in the desperate attempt to shut her eyes to the fearful truth that was now dawning upon her. "Why disclose this to me, and why disclose it in this strange way?"

"That also I shall now tell you," replied Fowler, replacing the letter in his pocket-book. "You perceive that, as Sir Charles is an illegitimate child, the baronetcy by rights is not his but mine."

He paused, watching the effect of his words.

Miss Montalvan had evidently got a start. This consequence, in all its width, had not till now presented itself to her mind.

"I have only to produce this evidence before a court of justice," continued Fowler, "and I could turn Sir Charles and the whole family out of Dunvarlich at once. And if rank—if wealth—was what I wanted, I would do it. If vengeance"—Fowler's eye flashed—"yes, if vengeance was all I sought, I would do it. I may do it as it is. If my end is not gained, I will."

A look of painful and profound anxiety began to deepen in Miss Montalvan's face.

"The whole power lies with me, you observe," resumed Fowler with that smile of covert triumph upon his face again. "Suppose that I blew out my brains with that pistol there, as I have sometimes felt disposed to do; or suppose (what would be less uncomfortable,—for me)—suppose I put this pocket-book

into the fire, the evidence would be gone in the one case, the claimant would be gone in the other, and you and the Dunvarlich people would have nothing more to fear."

Miss Montalvan turned her majestic eyes suddenly on Fowler as he spoke. A wild thought flashed in them for a moment, and vanished. There was a pause. The old look of painful anxiety settled in her face again.

"Now we come to the point," said Fowler. "On one condition I am prepared to renounce all my rights,—prepared to put this sole remaining proof of them into the fire. That condition it is in your power, Evelyn, to grant. You guess what it is?"

She looked at him anxiously, but said nothing.

"It is this,—dear Evelyn," cried Fowler with sudden earnestness, "that you become my wife."

She stood before him, striving to control herself, but her emotion was painfully visible. Her lips parted as if to speak, but they only quivered.

"Dear Evelyn, consent, and you save them. Save more than them," he added with deeper earnestness—"you save me! A power, such as no other in the world possesses, is in your hands. Here I am, a human being with much in me that is bad, but much also that is good, or can be converted into good. Your answer now will settle once and for ever whether it shall or shall not be—whether I—whom you once loved, Evelyn!—am henceforth to be a man or a monster."

Miss Montalvan had to some extent recovered her

firmness. Her look said No, she could not, she would not.

"Stop," said Fowler, "think first. Reject this offer—deny me the object of my life, and from this moment I cast good intentions, care, love, and mercy, to the dogs—I trample out every spark of compassionate feeling. I am resolved to do it. You will force me. The act shall be yours, not mine. I will turn every one of the family out of the Castle—ay, that old broken-down man with the rest of them—to beg, or steal, or die. I can do it, and I will."

He stood there, the man to execute the threat—fierce, powerful, relentless.

"Yes," he cried, "I will bring them down, every one of them. I will have vengeance then; ay, and laugh at their sufferings."

"No, no, Fowler, no!" cried Miss Montalvan, as the tears sprang into her eyes. "O you will not, you cannot, be so cruel. You will have pity upon them—upon the poor old man, broken down by disease, and nearly blind—Gilbert, too, wounded and maimed. And Mary, dear Mary! when she is just about to be made happy,—just when everything is looking bright again. No, no; Fowler, you will not—you cannot do it."

But he stood, pitiless as Fate.

"O no, Fowler, tell me that you will not, I beg—on my knees I implore you."

A look of triumph gleamed in his eye.

Humbled at last! The proud beauty, who had cast him off—who had treated him with so much disdain

—now on her knees before him! But his look of triumph vanished before the impulse of his love.

“Promise to be my wife,” he said earnestly. “Say the word—only say the word—and they are saved.”

“O, Fowler, I beg, I beseech you, do not ask me. I cannot leave Sir Charles now, when he is to be alone. Gilbert is to be married. So is Mary. And the poor old man will be left alone. O let me remain with him. He has been like a father to me. Let me nurse him in his helplessness. Let me show him my gratitude for the love he has shown to me. It is likely, too likely, that he will soon be taken away from us. O, do not ask me—at least till then.”

“Till then!” repeated Fowler impatiently. “He may live for twenty years. No; I am not to be put off. The simple question is before you. Say yes, or say no and take the consequences.”

“O, I cannot, I cannot. But surely you are too generous—you are too merciful—to plunge that noble, innocent family into wretchedness.”

“I have stated my terms,” replied Fowler sternly. “My mind is made up. No power in earth or hell can alter it now.”

Miss Montalvan rose to her feet, and drew back proudly, her lip quivering, and her eyes flashing with indignation. There was a wildness in her look now. A keen eye might have seen that some desperate purpose was kindling in her brain.

“Why appeal to *my* feelings of humanity?” said Fowler. “Every word you say applies with tenfold force to yourself. If the people at the Castle have

any claims upon my compassion they have surely more upon yours. What claims have they on mine? What have they done for me? How have they treated me?"

Beware, Fowler! There is something stirring in that girl's brain. Did you not see where she looked just now?

"Moreover," continued Fowler, "I am going to make a sacrifice in any case. I am going to sacrifice my hopes of you, if you say 'nay;' my right to a baronetcy, if you say 'yea.' That's surely enough for a vagabond like me. If I am willing to sacrifice a title and estate to get you for my wife, it surely is not much to ask in return that you should sacrifice your hope of a better husband, when, by doing so, you will at the same time save your friends from ruin."

Miss Montalvan's eyes had been fixed on Fowler's with a strange expression. Suddenly she turned them to the door behind him. "Don't let that man come in," she said hurriedly.

Fowler turned his head to the door. It was a *ruse*. He heard a click—the rustling of a dress—and, looking round again, started to see Miss Montalvan on the opposite side of the table, levelling his own pistol at his head.

"Hold, hold!" cried Fowler, throwing up his arm instinctively, and staggered by the suddenness of the apparition.

It was a terrible sight. The spirit of the girl was on fire. Quivering with her desperate purpose, she stood there, with the pistol levelled directly at Fowler's head.

"Stop!" she said, in a fierce whisper, when Fowler, in the first moment of his surprise, was recoiling towards the door. "If you move another step, I shall fire. I will—as sure as there is a God above us."

It was no mockery. The lightning gleamed in her dark eyes.

"Fowler," she said in a voice still quick but firmer. "Put that pocket-book into the fire. You hear me? Do it, or you are a dead man. Be quick. I am not to be tampered with. I shall count ten and fire. Now!"

"Ha, ha! you're a simple one," laughed Fowler with affected pleasantry; "the pistol isn't loaded!"

"The less harm, then, in snapping it at your head. Come. I am not so simple as you think."

"Come," she said, raising her voice. "Put that book in the flames, or I fire!"

Fowler's keen eye, however, had detected that Miss Montalvan had raised only one hammer of the double-barrelled pistol, and that her finger was on the wrong trigger. It needed but a moment to spring forward, clutch the pistol, and wrench it from her grasp.

"Now, Miss, that game's up," he said, breathing freely again, as he put down the hammer, and thrust the pistol into his pocket.

He looked at her sternly.

"If anything was needed to fix my resolution," he said, "you have supplied it. Here then is an end of all nonsense. I tell you now, once for all, that unless you give your consent—for I love you, Evelyn, in spite of this—my claim goes into court at once. That's fixed now, as fate is fixed."

He paused for a moment, and then resumed—

“But consent—consent to be what you once promised to be, Evelyn,” said Fowler, with a touch of tenderness again; “and so soon as the knot is tied, these documents shall be put into your hands to do with them as you like.”

He paused. Her face was pale as death. Her eyes were fixed with a ghastly expression upon his. She was evidently trying to think out the momentous problem that now lay before her. No doubt she thought of the terrible results which Fowler predicted from her refusal—the poor, old, half-blind baronet turned adrift upon a world that would cease to trouble itself about him so soon as it learned that he had lost his rank and wealth—Gilbert, with his broken arm and his prospects blighted in the proud morning of his life—Mary disappointed again, the £5000 taken away from the good doctor, and his hopes blighted once more, perhaps for ever.

“Well, Evelyn,” said Fowler, after a long pause; “what say you?”

She started. Tears sprang into her eyes.

“Give me time,” she pleaded; “give me time, Fowler. A few days at least, to think of it.”

He thought for a moment.

“So be it,” he said. “Let me see; this is Friday. On Monday night meet me here again, to go south with me as my wife, or to seal at once and for ever the fate of your friends.”

CHAPTER XXX.

FAREWELL.

SLEEP never visited Miss Montalvan's eyes that night. More than once, long after the Castle was wrapt in slumber, she rose and stole to the deep old-fashioned window of her chamber, and looked sadly out upon the still world of night. The moon was sailing in silent and regal beauty across the sky. The landscape, with its well-known hills and woods and moorland, lay stretching far, all dim and colourless and dead, the ghostly shadow of what it looked in the daylight. Poor girl! it was like her own life now, full of pale memories of the hopes and joys that were gone.

For her mind was now made up. Never indeed, from the time of that fearful interview the day before, had her thought been—"Shall I save myself and sacrifice them?" Never for one moment. But always this—"Can I save them without sacrificing myself?" But she could see no way, and her mind was fixed.

She looked paler than usual next day, and perhaps sadder at times, but her smile was sweet as ever; and any one who had known the sacrifice which that noble girl had already made in her heart, would have wondered, with silent admiration, at the divine calm that dwelt in her dark, earnest eyes. Whatever anguish there might be in her heart she concealed. She read to the old baronet; she accompanied Mary

on the piano; at dinner she laughed and talked with the others even more than usual—for it needs a great deal of laughter and talk to drown the ceaseless wail of a dying hope.

In the evening her vivacity had almost expended itself. A sadness *would* steal like a shadow over her face; but the moment she caught herself relapsing into silence and thought, she would stir herself up and join briskly in the conversation as before. She talked most of all to Gilbert. She seemed to be fond that night of sitting near him, and when anything separated them for a time, she would by and by find her way quietly to his side again. No one noticed it; but so it was. Once, indeed, Mary saw her eyes dwelling, with a strange, dreamy sadness, on Gilbert's face; at another time she suddenly found them turned, with the same unusual depth of feeling, upon herself; but she thought it might be fancy, and at any rate said nothing about it.

On the Sunday evening, Dr. Sutherland was at Dunvarlich. His eye, more keen in reading the human face, detected a something—he could not tell what—in Miss Montalvan's look. It was that quiet look of sadness that comes into the face of one who is moving about amongst dear familiar scenes and faces, and is whispering evermore in his heart—"It is the last time, We are about to part. Farewell!" But mingling with this sadness in Miss Montalvan's countenance, there was a look of sublime and tranquil joy that came flowing, like auroral light, into her eyes. It might be that she was trembling with a sad Christ-

like joy in the thought that, through the sacrifice of herself, these friends around her whom she loved so dearly, were to escape the gulf that, all unseen by them, was yawning at their feet.

Both of these expressions, however, were so quiet and subdued that, with the exception of Dr. Sutherland, no one remarked them; and even he, though he found his eyes drawn by an unaccountable fascination to Miss Montalvan's face that night, and caught himself more than once watching and wondering at its expression, could make nothing of it, and never mentioned the circumstance even to Mary, till the fearful events which followed soon after brought them back to his mind.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ORDINATION DINNER. MR. FLEX UPON THE GIFT OF GOD.

MONDAY came—a day that was destined to be one of sad memory to many. Two events, very different in kind, but, in the mysterious arrangements of providence, fatally bound together, were to take place that day. The one was the flight of Miss Montalvan with Fowler; the other was the ordination dinner of the Rev. Mr. Mitchell.

At twelve o'clock the ordination services were begun in the usual manner—the Rev. Mr. Flex of the King Street church preaching the ordination sermon. The

rest of the presbytery, ministers and elders, being seated on a high platform in full view of the people, listened to the services with all becoming solemnity and decorum; but when the services were over immediately retired to the vestry, became very jubilant and jocular, and proceeded to the King's Arms Hotel to dinner, in merry gossiping parties of two, three, and four. The dining-room in the King's Arms was soon as full as it could well hold, and ample justice was done to the dinner, which had been prepared with particular care by Mr. Gleg, the landlord, who was a manager in Mr. Mitchell's church.

Campbell had got leave of absence from his work till half-past four, that he might be present at his minister's ordination. He got a seat near the foot of the table—two from the croupier's left hand—opposite the Rev. Mr. Flex and a large-bodied and loquacious gentleman, who wore a white neckcloth, and turned out to be the Rev. Mr. Maccabees of Auchinmuir.

Somebody having referred to a melancholy accident that had befallen a drunken woman in the streets the week before, Mr. Maccabees described a very similar case that had occurred at Auchinmuir some time before, and proceeded to dilate, in a grave and impressive manner, on the deplorable consequences of intemperance. Most of those around him were too busy with their knives and forks to do more than throw in an occasional "Ah"—"Dear me"—"Too true," and perhaps a lengthier comment while being helped to something else. Campbell, however, supposing from the

tenor of Mr. Maccabees' remarks that he was a pillar of the temperance cause somewhere, listened (and endeavoured to let Mr. Maccabees see that he listened) with much interest and gratification. Campbell was a timid man, not very well fitted for standing out against the opinion of those whom he looked upon as his betters. He had strong misgivings about tasting any drink, even at an ordination dinner, and would most gratefully have sheltered himself behind the example of any one there, and especially behind the example of a clergyman.

By and by he saw a waiter coming round with the port and sherry. Anxious for the encouragement he so much needed, he availed himself of a momentary pause, during which Mr. Maccabees was searching for a fish-bone that had lost itself in his mouth, to say to him, deferentially,

"You're an abstainer, I suppose, sir?"

Mr. Maccabees, who had just picked out the bone from between his lips, looked at Campbell dubiously, and took a mouthful of water to clear his throat before speaking.

"Why, not exactly an abstainer," he said. "On principle I am. I think, sir, that the total abstinence movement is a most admirable movement—most admirable. There is a small society in our quarter to which I annually contribute my mite"—it was indeed a mite, as the secretary of that institution would have been prepared to testify—"and I wish it 'God-speed.' It does a great deal of good to many people, in my opinion. I tried it myself at one time

for the sake of example, but found that, unfortunately, it did not agree with me."

The time referred to by Mr. Maccabees was a period of ten days, during which, being in a friend's house where no liquors were used, he had used none: and where, having inadvertently seated himself near an open window one evening, he had caught a bad cold in his head, which he at once, and ever thereafter, attributed to the want of his accustomed beverages.

"No, sir," he said to Campbell, "I tried it, but found, unfortunately, that it did not agree with me. The fact is, my constitution"—Mr. Maccabees coughed to clear his throat, and tapped himself vaguely over the waistcoat—"my constitution, I find—ahem!—stands in need of a mild stimulant."

"Port or sherry, sir?" said the waiter.

"Port," said Mr. Maccabees. "And I say," he added in a lower tone, "bring me a little snack of brandy, will you?"

He cleared his throat again as he turned to Campbell, and repeated in his former tone,

"Yes, sir, I found that my constitution stood in need of a mild stimulant."

It may be remarked, parenthetically, that the mild stimulant of which Mr. Maccabees' constitution stood in need that night, turned out to be eight tumblers of whisky-toddy of extra strength. There are a great many people, however, with constitutions like the Rev. Mr. Maccabees'.

Campbell, thus thrown upon his own resources, filled his glass hastily with water; and when the

waiter reached him, said, in a flurried voice, as if anxious to get him past, "I have watter, thank ye;" and immediately, to allow no interval, asked Mr. Maccabees to be kind enough to pass the bread across. The device was successful, and Campbell breathed freely again.

When the dinner was over, and the toast-drinking was about to commence, Campbell looked anxiously at his minister, who sat at the other end of the table. Again and again he looked, in hopes of catching his eye and gleaning therefrom what he ought to do. But Mr. Mitchell (who was probably not altogether at his ease himself) was never looking in Campbell's direction, and was now mixing a tumbler of whisky-toddy for himself, with the best grace he could. The others were all occupied by this time with the same agreeable task.

"Mr. Campbell," said the croupier, "I don't see anything in your glass."

Poor Campbell, who had been cherishing a desperate hope that he might escape observation, coloured a little, as if he had been caught in some act of dishonesty, and said he really didn't care for tasting anything.

What? Didn't care for tasting anything!

The croupier looked at him: the Rev. Mr. Maccabees looked at him: the Rev. Mr. Flex cocked his head, and fixed his little black eyes severely upon him. Two or three others also looked at him as if in surprise.

"Why, Mr. Campbell, you can't object to drink

your minister's health, and you one of his right-hand men," said the croupier.

"You are not one of those teetotal bodies, I hope," said Mr. Flex. The reverend gentleman uttered the word "teetotal" in a tone of supreme contempt; and as the elders around him had all their reeking jorums of punch steaming delightfully under their noses by this time, of course they laughed little scornful laughs, and looked at Campbell.

"You are not one of them, I hope?" said Mr. Flex.

"W-weel no, sir—that is—no' exac'ly," replied Campbell with a faint smile.

"I'm glad of that, sir," said Mr. Flex, with less severity in his tone. "You look like a man of more sense, Mr. Campbell." And Mr. Flex passed the bottle across the table.

When Mr. Flex said that he was glad that Campbell was not a teetotaller, he spoke with perfect sincerity. Mr. Flex had experience enough to know that the peculiar sort of sentiment and wit that begins to show itself in a man after his fourth tumbler is best appreciated by men who have had their fourth tumbler with him.

Poor Campbell, with the old appetite beginning to prompt him from within, and Christian ministers and brother-elders prompting him from without, had not the courage to remain firm; and when the bottle, as we have said, was passed across to him, he filled his glass. Perhaps he thought that what his betters did, there could be no sin in his doing. Perhaps he thought that the occasion and the sort of company

were guarantees that no harm would come to him. Perhaps he thought that, as he was about to take the pledge again, and take it for good and all, in a week or two, he might as well enjoy a quiet glass in good company while he had the chance. He looked up to the other end of the table, and was encouraged by seeing that Mr Mitchell had already compounded his tumbler of punch, and was ladling some of it into his glass. There could surely be no harm in following the example of his good friend and guardian angel.

"Your health, Mr. Campbell," said the Rev. Mr. Flex, with a graceful inclination of his head.

"Same to you, sir, and thanck ye," replied Campbell, much gratified by such courtesy from a gentleman like Mr. Flex. Both glasses were taken up, and set down empty.

"Speaking of teetotalism," said Mr. Flex, in a more cheerful voice, "I hold strong opinions on that point, I have always objected to teetotalism on principle." He cleared his throat. "God"—he began, in the tone he employed when preaching, as if he were now going to put the matter in its religious light—"God, sir, made man with certain appetites, and called him 'very good.' Teetotallers seem to think that the Creator has bungled his work, and that they must put it right for him by eradicating one of these appetites. Now, I call that attempt not only hopeless—I call it impious."

One or two of the elders who were nearest to Mr. Flex cried, "Hear, hear!" and looked bravely at each other, as much as to say, "That's good. Now, that's the sort of thing."

"Strengthened by divine grace, Mr. Campbell," continued Mr. Flex impressively, "we are to regulate, not to destroy our appetites. Wine is a gift of God—a gift of God, Mr. Campbell—and he intends that we should use it without abusing it."

Mr. Flex, as he said this, drew up his head by successive jerks in a hen-like fashion; and when he had refilled and drunk off his glass, he set it down on the table with a firm rap, as if he would like to know whether any person or persons there present would undertake to controvert that.

Campbell evidently thought that Mr. Flex had settled the question, and replenished his own glass with a much more comfortable air.

It is unnecessary to describe with what enthusiasm the toast of the evening was drunk—the whole company rising to their feet, with their glasses of smoking toddy in their hands, and shouting, "Hip-hip-hurrah! Hip-hip-hurrah!" and "Once more—Hip-hip-hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!!"—and how the whole twenty or thirty bumpers were swept down the twenty or thirty throats with alcoholic fervour, before the devout company resumed their seats.

I feel obliged to state, however, that the Rev. Mr. Mitchell did not seem, while this beautiful ceremony was being gone through, to be nearly so happy as he ought to have been. Possibly it may have struck him that, upon the whole, there might have been devised some more appropriate way of introducing a Christian minister to the work of reclaiming the lost. Very probably he did think something of the kind.

But then Mr. Mitchell was a dissenter, and dissenters have very queer notions about some things.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE "GIFT OF GOD" BEGINS TO WORK.—THE RAILWAY STATION.

SHORTLY after four o'clock—so soon, indeed, as Mr. Mitchell had responded—Campbell slipped quietly away, having to return to his duty. He walked as steadily as usual; even his wife, when he went home to change his clothes, observed nothing wrong with him. Had any fear or suspicion induced her to look more closely, she might have discovered that a dull, lurid light had begun to glow in his eyes. Alas! the embers of that fearful craving that had been smouldering within him for the past year had been stirred into flame once more!

When Campbell had changed his clothes, he went down to the railway station. It was his duty, that afternoon, to run a damaged engine to Stirling, and bring another back for the night parliamentary train to Edinburgh. Blacklock accompanied him, as usual, in the capacity of stoker; and noticed nothing unusual about him at first, till at Stirling, where Campbell went to the refreshment-room, he found him coming back with the smell of drink upon him. Blacklock spoke to him about it, but he passed it off sullenly, saying there was "something wrang wi' his stomach."

Had Campbell been a learned man like the Rev. Mr. Maccabees, he would have said that his constitution needed a mild stimulant.

His tone, when he answered the question, showed that he wanted nothing more should be said on the subject. Blacklock was a man who never liked to make himself disagreeable when he could help it. He was all the more anxious not to make himself so in the present case, Campbell being his superior, and about to become his father-in-law. For matters had now been arranged between Jenny and the young stoker, and their wedding was to come off in about five weeks.

"And so Jenny's gangin' wi' us the nicht," said Blacklock to his superior, as they bowled along the iron road on their way back to Perth.

"Ay."

"Goin' to see her auntie at Corstorphine she was tellin' me."

"Ay."

"Will she be wi' her till it's time for the waddin'?"

"Donno."

Campbell was not in the humour for talking; and the liquor he had taken was beginning to produce so stupifying an effect upon him, that had he been any other man, Blacklock would have reported to the station-master at Perth, and got another driver on for the night in Campbell's stead. But Campbell had conducted himself well for a whole year now; his wages had been raised in consequence; and he had risen so much in the estimation of the station-masters

and others along the line, in consequence of his sober and steady habits, that Blacklock could not bear the thought of reporting him, and being the means of bringing him once more into disgrace.

They got back to Perth with their new engine soon after nightfall. In less than an hour thereafter they would have to start with the night train; and Blacklock, though not very easy in his mind, resolved to say nothing, but give Campbell the chance of escaping the attention of the station-master.

Twenty minutes or so before the hour for starting, Jenny made her appearance in the now brilliantly lighted station, with a party of her friends, including little Lizzie and one of the lads from Dunvarlich, who had come in, in the spring-cart, with Jenny's trunk.

There was quite a merry party of them—several lads and lasses, all full of fun and frolic, and laughing boisterously at every joke and sally. The whole party came up to where Blacklock was, and a great deal of lively bantering ensued. Blacklock, laughing and joking in his turn, and evidently very proud of his Jenny, who, in her new frock and bonnet (gifts from the young ladies at the Castle), and with cheeks as fresh and rosy as the morning, looked quite captivating.

"It's a wonder to me, Jenny," cried her cousin, a short, stout, jovial fellow, in his Sunday clothes, and with his Sunday hat cocked over one eye,—*"it's a wonder to me you would look at a great eily chiel lik' that"*—pointing to Blacklock, whose appearance was

certainly not much improved by the oil and coal-dust from the engine. "I'm mair lik' your man noo, am I no'."

"Weel, it's no' owre late yet," cried another.

"Dad! you're richt," cried Jenny's cousin, "Come awa', Jenny; we'll mak' it up atween oursel'es."

And amidst shouts of laughter from the rest of the party, and especially from Jenny herself, he drew her arm thro' his, and began to march her off in what would have been grand style, but for Jenny's laughing, and screaming, and trying to release herself.

"An' ye're ginna leave me, Wully," cried a blooming damsel who was known to be "Wully's" choice.

"Wow, Maggy lass, never a bit," replied the accommodating Wully. "Cleek on to my ither erm here. I'm fit for twa o' ye ony day. And if there's ony mair o' yez wants me, grip on ahint. We'll ower the hills and awa' till Utah. I'll hae my pick o' ye there, ye ken', and han' the rest o' ye owre to the Prophet."

In rollicking fun and badinage of this description, the merry party passed the time till Jenny had to take her seat.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE KNOT IS TIED.

At the same time, and within a short distance of the same spot, another and very different scene was being enacted. In that private parlour in Grant's Hotel,

with which the reader is already familiar, Miss Montalvan had again met Fowler, according to appointment, and had announced her decision.

Pale, but serenely beautiful, she stood at the table, whereon writing materials were spread out.

She held in her hand a paper in her own handwriting; and in a low but clear and deliberate voice, she read it to Fowler. It ran thus:—

“I, George Fowler Macdonald, do hereby, of my own free-will and by reason of my marriage with Evelyn Montalvan, renounce for ever any and every claim I may have to the title or estates of Dunvarlich.”

“You will sign that,” she said.

“Willingly, my dear Evelyn,” replied Fowler, on whose face there flickered a smile of triumphant joy. He took a pen, glanced over the document, and affixed his name.

Miss Montalvan took the paper, looked at it, folded it up, and put it carefully away into the bosom of her dress. Poor girl! unable from the circumstances to seek advice or assistance from others, she was trying to make everything as safe and secure as she could.

“I haven’t brought a clergyman to perform the ceremony,” said Fowler. “It isn’t necessary in Scotland. All that we need to do is to acknowledge ourselves man and wife either before witnesses or in writing. Shall I ring, and get up some of the people here? It won’t take a minute.”

“No, no,” said Miss Montalvan nervously. “Save me that. Let it be by writing.”

"As you please, my dear Evelyn, so that the thing be done. A solemn declaration in writing will suffice."

"Show me what will do, and I will copy it," said Miss Montalvan.

Fowler immediately took a slip of paper and pencilled the words,—

"I hereby solemnly declare myself to be the wife of George Fowler Macdonald, Esq., of Litster, in Hampshire."

"That, signed, will do," said Fowler.

Miss Montalvan glanced at the words, and without a remark, sat down, copied them out upon another sheet of paper, and affixed her name.

And so, in the eye of the law of Scotland, Evelyn Montalvan became Fowler's wife.

"Bless you, sweet Evelyn," cried Fowler in a sudden transport of joy the moment she had laid down the pen and risen. "You are now my own." And, throwing his arm round her, he drew the beautiful girl to his heart, and kissed her passionately. She yielded with scarcely a trace of emotion.

"Now," she said, "it is done. Give me those documents."

Fowler, without hesitation, drew several slips of paper from his pocket, and, after looking to see that they were all there, handed them to her.

"This then," she said, looking him in the face, "is all the written evidence that remains of your claim to Dunvarlich?"

"It is—all that I know of."

“Swear it before Almighty God,” she said with trembling lip.

Fowler raised his hand to heaven, and called God to witness that it was even as he had said. Fowler was sincere. He was really and truly sacrificing his legal rights for the girl he so adored.

Miss Montalvan immediately went to the fire, and dropped the papers amongst the ruddy coals. In a moment they writhed like things in agony, blazed up, and were speedily consumed.

She stood watching them burn—her delicate lip curling with a proud smile of triumph, and a strange light upon her face.

“Now, dear Evelyn,” said Fowler, when the papers were quite consumed, “my part of the contract is fulfilled.”

She looked at him and said slowly—

“SO IS MINE.”

Fowler glanced at her in surprise. There seemed a hidden meaning in the words and tone; and that strange light had flashed again into her face. As he looked, it vanished.

He recalled his thoughts and pulled out his watch. “The time is about up,” he said. “You can step into the room there and get yourself ready for the journey. The carriage is at the door.”

Within five minutes after, Fowler handed his bride into the carriage that stood waiting in front of the hotel; and unrecognized by any one they drove away through the dark streets to the station. Fowler, the *better* to escape recognition, had drawn his slouched

hat over his brows and thrown a heavy plaid, round him, which concealed the lower part of his face. His bride was closely veiled, and had drawn round her a rich tartan plaid—a beautiful birth-day present that she had got from Gilbert only the week before.

The station was full of hurry and bustle when they reached it. Fowler found an unoccupied compartment in one of the first-class carriages, handed his fair companion in, followed her, and shut the door.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

BE YE ALSO READY!

Is there nothing ominous to-night in the murky sky? Are there no strange sounds in the outer air? Is there nothing portentous in the thrum of the monster engine, looking out with its fiery eyes into the dark and stormy night?

In the busy station there is no thought of danger. The boy is making his last noisy round with *Punch* and the Edinburgh and Glasgow papers; the loungers are chatting and laughing in groups under the brilliant gas-lights; people at the windows are gaily bidding good-bye to their friends on the platform. Amongst these is Jenny, whose blooming face is looking out at one of the third-class carriage windows, and who is laughing at cousin "Wully," who is making a great show of wiping a copious discharge of tears from his eyes, with a large blue pocket-handkerchief with white

spots, which he pretends to wring after every second or third wipe. He would have wept real tears—kind-hearted, honest “Wully”—could he have known what was about to befall.

It is a long train, heavily freighted with humanity—fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, and children. How many figures in that crowded train a lounge might pause to look at; for every human being in that long train has a history of his own, and friends, and plans, and hopes. Do you see that little lad with his healthy young face at the window there? He is leaving home for the first time—going away with swelling pride and hope to a situation he has been applying for, and has at last got in Glasgow. He will never fill it, poor fellow. His sister will be waiting for him at the station in Glasgow to-morrow morning, but she will have to leave it again alone. He is the only son of his mother. There is his mother in her widow's cap standing close by the open carriage door to be near her boy as long as she can. “Dear Jimmie,” she calls him as she gives him the oft-repeated warnings, counsels, and benedictions. Under the seat where he is sitting, though we cannot see it, there is a dumpy little carpet-bag, which the fond mother packed carefully herself, with many prayers and tears. It contains the whole of Jimmie's little wardrobe—two or three shirts, carefully starched and ironed with her own hands, socks and slippers, a book or two, and a number of little odds and ends, which she thinks her boy will be the better of, and which she has scrimped herself to buy for him. There is also a neat little marginal pocket-bible,

which he has promised, with a kiss, to read a few verses of every morning and night, and on which she has inscribed his name, to remind him of his mother and his home. Jimmie's pockets have been stuffed with all manner of eatables, put up in dumpy parcels, to comfort him on his journey. He is evidently beginning to think now how kind and self-sacrificing his mother has been, and how she will feel when she goes back to the quiet little home which they left half-an-hour ago together, but to which she is now to return alone. He is evidently thinking of something like that, for he looks every now and then as if he were going to cry. But he is a man now, going away to a situation in the big city; and he blows his nose bravely, giving a furtive wipe to his eye before taking his handkerchief from his face, buttons his jacket, and endeavours to bear up like a man.

"You'll drop me a note, Jimmie dear, to say you've got safe there," his mother says for the sixth or seventh time since he took his seat. For the sixth or seventh time Jimmie says he will. And he means to do it; but it is ordered differently; and he will never put pen to paper again. Farewell, poor boy—farewell, lonely widow! We shall see him and thee again no more.

* * * * *

"Now then! Seats—seats!" cried the guard as he moved along, slamming the open carriage doors.

Suddenly, just as the signal for starting was about to be given, a stout little gentleman, laden with hat-box, wrappers, and umbrella, followed by a lady

bearing a parasol, dumpy reticule, and several small parcels, came bouncing from the booking-office upon the platform, perspiring and flurried with excitement.

"First class, sir?" cried a porter, running up.

"Yes, yes; first class," they replied breathlessly.

"Here you are, sir," and the porter opened the door of the compartment into which Fowler and his bride had gone. Fowler showed his face at the open door, and looked savagely at the intruder; but the stout little gentleman bundled in his wife, bundled himself in after her, and the door was shut.

All right. The bell was rung, the signal was given, the steam was turned on, and with a loud "Wh—ish! wh—ish!" the engine with its long train of crowded carriages moved away with quickening speed into the darkness.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE RAILWAY CHASE.

IN the bright red glare of the furnace-fire stood Blacklock and Campbell. Blacklock shovelled in a quantity of coals, and slammed the iron door.

"It's like we'll hae a scowry night," he said, as he looked up into the dark, portentous sky.

"Like enough," said Campbell sullenly. Campbell had had another taste of the "Gift of God" at Perth, and was unusually morose, and more inclined to sleep than talk. After one or two more unavailing at-

tempts to get up a conversation, Blacklock drew further into shelter, and sat down on one of the sliding seats under the storm-board; resigning himself, we may suppose, to pleasant thoughts of Jenny, and feeling happy at her being so near him. Campbell remained standing sullenly on the foot-plate to attend to the engine.

They passed Forgandenny and Forteviot without stopping. They stopped at Dunning, where three or four people, muffled well up to protect themselves from the night air, were waiting for the train. They stopped again at Auchterarder, where the station lights looked cheery by contrast with the darkness of the night. Here they shunted on to the down-line, a little beyond the station, till the night mail for the west should pass.

The mail came up about five minutes after, sharp upon its time; stopped for a minute to take in the bags; and then, with an impatient snort, passed on into the darkness. Campbell and Blacklock thereupon prepared to re-shunt to their proper line. They put on the steam and reversed the engine; but there was a slight incline at the spot; the train was heavy, and they could not get it to move. After one or two attempts, Campbell—speaking in a thick voice, for he was half stupid with drink—ordered Blacklock to get a crowbar and put it to the wheel to give the engine a start.

“Will Sinclair have one?” said Blacklock, jerking his thumb towards an engine they had passed on the siding nearly opposite the platform.

He had better go and see.

Campbell sluggishly continued his attempts to start his engine; while Blacklock went back to Sinclair's, glancing up, as he passed, at the windows of the carriage where Jenny was, in hopes of seeing her face and getting a smile. He told Sinclair what he wanted. Sinclair, who was reading a newspaper by the light of an oil-lamp, had no crow-bar, but thought there was one in the shed. As he said so, he looked carelessly round towards the train which Blacklock had just left, and saw that it had got a start already, but was moving in the wrong direction. He continued watching it for a few seconds, expecting to see it stop and come back; but still it kept moving away and away.

"Hollo! what does the fellow mean?" he cried, jumping to his feet. "He's going off on the down-line!"

Blacklock looked, and turned white as death. The awful truth flashed upon him. Campbell was drunk, and did not know what he was about. In an instant, leaping from Sinclair's engine, Blacklock ran swiftly along the line in pursuit of the retreating train. It was hopeless. A full head of steam was on. The train was quickening its pace every moment. The heads that had been popping out from some of the carriage windows to see what the cause of detention was, were drawn in and the windows pulled up again, under the impression, no doubt, that the train was again upon its way. The guard in the break, so soon *as he found that the train was actually setting off on*

the wrong line, began to make his way hurriedly from carriage to carriage towards the engine, but missed his footing and fell heavily to the ground. Before he had recovered from the stunning effects of the fall, and got upon his legs again, the train was off.

The other guard had been standing on the platform with the station-master, waiting till the train should come back alongside. The moment they saw that it was moving away on the wrong track, they cried to the pointsman, and the guard rushed out upon the line.

The pointsman shouted, waved the red lamp, ran and turned on the distance danger signal which faced north, so that Campbell could see it. No attention was paid to these signals: and away the long train went, thundering into the darkness.

Blacklock ran madly along the line, in the desperate hope that he might overtake the train, and in his agony crying to God to stop it. But the red lights along the line were growing smaller and smaller, and hope was gone. Blacklock stood for a moment like one bereft of his senses; and then, starting, ran back.

Sinclair stood on his engine awaiting him.

"Are they off?"

"O yes, off! My God!" he cried in agony, "what are we to do?"

Sinclair plucked out his watch, and instantly an expression of horror came into his face.

"The night express from the south is coming on

that line," he said hurriedly. "She is due here in sixteen minutes. She must be passing Blackford now."

Aghast with horror, Blacklock staggered and covered his face with his hands. Suddenly a thought flashed into his brain. He clutched Sinclair's arm with the grasp of a giant.

"Give her chase—give her chase!" he cried eagerly. "Quick! Is your steam up? Let's give her chase on the up-line. We may stop her, or stop the express afore they meet. For God's sake, quick!"

Blacklock's look had changed in a moment, from one of prostration to one of terrible eagerness and hope. He sprang upon the engine. Fortunately steam was already up. They backed the engine, got upon the up-line, only paused to pass one word with the station-master, and then away they dashed full-speed into the wild dark night.

The other engine and train had got the start of them by nearly two miles. If the express was true to her time, there was no hope. In five or six minutes there would be a collision. But if the express was in the least behind, there was still a desperate chance. Away, then, and away.

On they went, with thundering crank and grinding steel. The tender quivered and rocked; the ground, lit by the glare of the engine lamps, swept like lightning under them. There was a terrible voice in the quick, clanking wheels—"Life or death!—life or death!—life or death!" Away and away, *like a fiery meteor* through the driving storm and

darkness. The telegraph poles flow past like frightened spirits.

"There!—there she is!" burst from the lips of both men together, as they caught sight of two red lights shining far ahead upon the line.

"On—on! for God's sake, on!" cried Blacklock with frightful eagerness.

They dashed with a shattering roar between the rocks at Lentrie, burst forth again, and away on the wild and terrible pursuit. They were gaining rapidly on the train ahead. There was still hope—a desperate hope. They dashed, with another roar, through the deep cutting at Beath's Ward, and still away and away. "Life or death—life or death—life or death!" clanked the wheel.

"Ha! what's that! Did you see that?" cried Sinclair suddenly, as his eye caught sight, for an instant, of a spectral form that flashed across the rails almost at the engine wheel.

"On—on!" Blacklock almost screamed, never turning his eyes from the red lights ahead, which they were now rapidly nearing.

Just as the long train crossed the Bridge of Beath, they dashed alongside. Now or never. The awful crisis had come.

The Parliamentary train was thundering along the parallel rails at the velocity of nearly thirty miles an hour: and as Sinclair and Blacklock passed carriage after carriage, they could see, in the dusky light of the lamps within, the dim rows of passengers, many of them asleep, and all unconscious that they were on

the wrong line, bowling, quick and fast, into the jaws of death.

Great God! what a picture of human-kind was that, if one had a moment to think of it.

Blacklock's breath was short and gasping. The perspiration was standing in great beads upon his brow. As he passed the carriage where poor Jenny was, he bent over and glared wildly in, but could not distinguish her amongst the motley crowd of slumbering passengers. On they dashed—Blacklock and Sinclair—thundering along side by side with the other train, till they came abreast of the engine. Campbell was there, but apparently stupefied or asleep, sitting on the seat under the storm-board, with his head hanging down nearly to his knees.

Blacklock shouted and yelled at the pitch of his voice; Sinclair blew the whistle: but Campbell either did not hear or was too far gone to pay heed.

"Let's dash ahead and signal the Express to stop," cried Sinclair excitedly.

He pulled out his watch, and stooped to see the time. Eight minutes to eleven. The Express was two minutes behind her time already. There wasn't a moment to lose.

"O! here she comes!" cried Blacklock, clutching Sinclair's arm convulsively.

Far ahead, along the line, two points of light like the eyes of a basilisk had glided into view, and were fast dilating and growing brighter and fiercer, as the iron monster from the south came on through the *darkness at the rate of a mile a minute*. Already the

thunder of its approach was distinctly perceptible. Scarcely a mile separated the two trains. In thirty seconds they would be together!

Sinclair's engine was still bowling on, alongside the other.

"I'll jump across," cried Blacklock suddenly. "Dash on—you—and signal the Express."

In a moment, before Sinclair could hold him back, Blacklock was at the side of the engine, had crouched low and made a desperate spring. He alighted upon the foot-board of the other tender. He staggered for a moment; but, recovering his balance instantly, he sprang forward to the engine, shut off the steam, and put on the break. It was all the brave fellow could do. Now for life—for life! He seized Campbell. He dragged him to the side of the engine, to leap off. Ah! too late! The huge train was still rolling on, when the Express with its flying plume, and its glaring irids, magnifying into two great orbs of white flame, came on thro' the darkness like a thunderbolt, and in a moment had dashed upon them!

The shock was terrific. The engines were smashed, the red fires flared up; the huge carriages of both trains came on like successive explosions, and leaping madly over one another, piled themselves up and up into a hideous quivering mountain of agony and death. Some, toppling over, rolled aside into the darkness; and a thousand shrieks rang wildly up into the shuddering air of night.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DUNVARLICH—NEWS OF THE FLIGHT—GILBERT STARTS
IN PURSUIT.

GILBERT MACDONALD was sitting in his room studying some military charts, when a knock came to the door, and Fobbles showed himself. On the captain's looking round to learn his errand, Fobbles came in and, with an air of unusual mystery, shut the door behind him.

"Captin'," he said in a subdued tone, which he assumed when he wished to be confidential, "your parding, sir. But Lizzy Morrison, as has been in town seein' Jenny away, sez as Miss Montalvan's off by the same train. She see'd her a-gettin' into the carriage.

"And she sez," continued Fobbles, lowering his voice into a tone of still deeper mystery, "there vos a gennel-man with her as she could swear vos Mr. Fowler."

"Nonsense!" said Gilbert, putting down his pencil.

"Vell, sir, so I sez to Lizzie. But she sez she'll take her affirmadavid as to Mr. Fowler, for he put his head out o' the winder, just afore the train started, and she see'd him as plain as I sees your honour. Miss Montalvan's face was obskewered with a wail, but Lizzie sez she'd know her by her figure and walk anyvair."

A something undefinable in Miss Montalvan's manner for the past day or two recurred to Gilbert, and immediately a dark suspicion flashed across his *mind*. He rose.

"Send up the girl," he said to Fobbles.

Fobbles bowed, left the room, and in a minute or two, reappeared, bringing in the little maid, much as a policeman might march a prisoner into the dock. The girl, overawed by the presence in which she suddenly found herself, dropped a low curtsy, and stood nervously fingering her bonnet-string.

Gilbert questioned her particularly about the dress and appearance of the two persons she had seen. The gentleman, she said, was big and broad-shouldered, with heavy black whiskers and moustache. He wore a shaggy topcoat and a queer hat with a broad brim, which the little maid endeavoured to illustrate the shape of with her hands.

"A sluice, Capting," said Fobbles, turning to Gilbert with an explanatory air. "The sort of hat as 'ighway-men wears. See the pict-yahs." Having delivered this lucid explanation with a bland air, Fobbles signified to Lizzie that she might go on.

Gilbert questioned her about the lady. She was dressed, the girl said, in one of her plain linsey-woolsey dresses with a mantle over it, and she carried a beautiful new plaid of Macdonald tartan over her arm.

Gilbert felt a qualm come over him. It was just such a plaid that he had presented to Miss Montalvan on her birth-day the week before.

After a few more questions he dismissed the little maid, and sent Fobbles for Mary, who was with her father in the library.

When she appeared he said, "You told me, Mary,

that Evelyn had gone to spend the evening at the Valentines'."

"Yes."

"Did she take the carriage with her?"

"She took the gig, but sent John back with it. She said if she thought of returning to-night, he could hire a cab at Smith's. What makes you ask?"

"Did you notice how she was dressed?"

"Why, Gilbert, what a question for you!" cried Mary laughing. "Why do you want to know?"

"I'll tell you by and by. Answer me first."

Mary told him, as well as she could recollect, how Miss Montalvan was dressed; and Gilbert found that her description corresponded exactly with the one he had got from the little maid.

"Did she take the tartan plaid I gave her?" he inquired next.

"Ah, now I see what you are driving at!" said Mary archly. "O yes; comfort yourself. She did take it. And she attaches great value to it, I assure you. But take care. What would Miss Fanny Brooks say if she knew all this"—and Mary smiled and shook her finger playfully at her brother. "Why, Gilbert, you gruff fellow, what makes you look so stern?"

"Well, Mary, don't flurry yourself. One of the girls says that she saw Evelyn go off by to-night's train with a man that she is sure was Fowler.

Mary looked at first as if she were going to laugh at the bare idea of such a thing; but suddenly a thought seemed to strike her and she turned grave. *Perhaps that strange look that she had been surprised*

to see in Miss Montalvan's face more than once during the two previous days came back into her mind, and came with a new meaning. At any rate she suddenly checked herself, and began to look frightened.

"Don't distress yourself, Mary, till we see if there be any truth in this," said Gilbert. "Very likely it is a foolish mistake. But I will ride to the Valentines at once, and see if Evelyn is there."

Enjoining secrecy on Mary, who was now thoroughly alarmed, Gilbert went to the stable himself to see his horse saddled.

In less than ten minutes he was on the way to Perth.

He reached the Valentines about eleven. Most of the family had already retired to bed, and Gilbert would not allow the servant to call any of them. Miss Montalvan had not been there that day; and the servant was quite sure that the ladies had not been expecting her. That was all he needed to know.

With his worst fears confirmed, Gilbert turned his horse's head and galloped to the railway station. Leaving his horse in charge of a porter, he walked into the station-master's room. That functionary was sitting at the fire in the outer office, drowsily conning a newspaper, while his clerk sat writing leisurely at his desk.

Immediately on recognizing his visitor, the station-master rose and offered him a seat; but Gilbert began, without a moment's delay, to state his case and make inquiries. Well, curious enough, the station-master said, he had seen a young lady whom he thought like Miss Montalvan cross the platform just as the

night parliamentary was preparing to start. But he would soon find out, if Captain Macdonald would take a seat by the fire for a minute or two. The station-master returned with a couple of porters, whose statements left no doubt that the young lady in question was Miss Montalvan, and left little doubt on Gilbert's mind that the gentleman who accompanied her was Fowler.

He rose.

"When does the next train go south?" he asked.

"None now till half-past six in the morning. Had you been here half-an-hour sooner you might have got the mail-train from the north, which passes the parliamentary at Auchterarder."

"None till half-past six in the morning!" exclaimed Gilbert. "Then we must telegraph. Where will they be just now? Will they have passed Stirling?"

The station-master looked at the clock.

"No; that train is not due at Stirling for eighteen minutes yet."

"Then telegraph to Stirling at once. Give me a bit of paper and I shall pencil out a message. There has been foul play in the matter. I will take the responsibility of their detention."

On mention being made of the telegraph, the station-master instinctively looked round at the telegraphic machine that stood on a shelf in the wall, and glancing at the face of it, he saw the little needle tap-tapping in one direction.

"Hallo, Alic!" he said, turning to the clerk, "what are you about? They're calling Perth. See who it is *that calls*."

The clerk left his desk, and taking his stand opposite the machine, gave two or three taps to the keys and watched the needle for an answer. A vigorous tapping immediately ensued, varied by intervals, during which the clerk stood still, watching the white needle as it jerked silently to and fro on the black dial-plate.

"Who calls?" asked the station-master.

"Greenloaning," replied the clerk; and after a minute or two had elapsed, during which the signalling was continued, he added, "A collision has occurred on the down-line between Bridge of Beath and Greenloaning. Two passenger trains."

"What! A collision!" cried the station-master. "Two passenger trains! Impossible!"

The clerk was still watching the motion of the needle, giving an occasional tap to cut short a word.

"Engines and carriages smashed," he continued monotonously. "Up and down lines blocked. Many lives lost. Send an engine immediately with surgeons, and as many navvies as possible; but no delay. Sinclair is on this side with his engine. Was within a hundred yards of the spot when the collision took place. The up-parliamentary was running on the down-line."

The station-master looked round at Gilbert.

"That's yours!" he said.

Gilbert's eyes dilated. His face turned pale. There was a moment's pause.

"This is fearful—fearful!" said the station-master.

"But excuse me. There is not a moment to be lost."

"When will your engine start?" asked Gilbert.

"Fifteen minutes, or less."

"I will go with it," Gilbert said, and followed the station-master out of the office.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SEARCH AMONG THE DEAD.—THE SHOCK.

RACKED by the most fearful apprehensions, Gilbert rode to the nearest hotel and left his horse. By the time he returned, the engine was getting up steam, and several labourers, who had been hurried from their houses, some of them from their beds, were already clustered together on the platform.

Just as the engine, with tender and carriage attached, came puffing up to the platform, Dr. Sutherland, still very pale and thin from his recent illness, made his appearance, muffled up to the throat and carrying his box of instruments and a big bundle of lint under his arm. He was surprised to find Gilbert there: horrified beyond expression to hear his story. But there was no time to be lost. They got into the carriage together, and were soon flying across the dark country towards the scene of disaster.

At twenty minutes past twelve they crossed the Bridge of Beath, and found themselves at the place where the collision had occurred. Here a wild and wierd-like scene presented itself. The front carriages of *both trains* had been set on fire by the furnace coals,

and were blazing fitfully in the darkness, flinging up at intervals broad sheets of flame, that cast a ruddy light over the piles of shattered carriages, beams, boxes, and garments, and upon the labourers who were hard at work clearing away the debris. Lights were flitting hither and thither along the line and away on both sides.

So soon as the carriage stopped, two men, one a labourer, the other a well-dressed man who seemed to be taking some management—both of them carrying lanterns—came up to ask if any doctors were there. Dr. Sutherland at once announced himself.

"Dr. Sutherland!" exclaimed the better-dressed man of the two with evident gratification. "Thank God! It's like you, sir. I knew, if you were able, you would be here."

"This man, sir," he added, "will show you to the place where you are most needed. Two surgeons from Blackford are here already, but there's work for six. O sir, it's awful!"

So soon as Dr. Sutherland was away, Gilbert made inquiries of the man.

"Forty-five, sir, killed outright," said the man. "And as many more not expected to live."

"Where are the bodies?" asked Gilbert.

"At the farm-house yonder. You see the lights. Some of the worst cases are there too. Those that aren't hurt badly are, most o' them, away to the village in carts."

Oppressed with direst forebodings, Gilbert made the best of his way across the dark field to the farm-house.

There a horrible spectacle awaited him. In the various sheds and out-houses—from which groans and piercing cries were issuing—there were stretched the wounded, the dying, and the dead. The first sight that met Gilbert's eye, as he entered the barn, was a little pile of human limbs newly amputated, and lying near the door. The surgeons' lamps brought out into hideous relief the poor, half-naked creatures who were shrieking under the surgeon's knife; and, more dimly, those who were stretched out awaiting their turn, and the groups of people, many of whom had been fellow-passengers, who were trying to soothe their pain. One poor youth, with light, tangled hair and white eyeballs glistening in the dull lamp-light, who, judging from the flatness at the lower end of the blanket that covered him, had got his limbs amputated, was crying out, "O—h! o—h!" each cry loud at first, prolonged, and dying away in a moan.

Eagerly, fearfully Gilbert looked from form to form, with a vague dread; but the one he sought was not there. Racked with agonizing suspense, he visited the other out-houses and the kitchen, which had also been converted into an hospital, but nothing could he see or hear of Miss Montalvan. And now the hope began to spring up that she had escaped—that she might be amongst those who had been sent on to the village. His hope was doomed to speedy and terrible extinction.

Following two men who were carrying a dead body away into what seemed to be a disused stable, where burned a solitary lamp, the first object that caught his *eye was the dead body of Fowler.* A ghastly sight

it was. The head was uncovered and twisted to the side, the eyes protruded horribly, and one of the legs appeared to have been crushed and nearly torn off. And now the shock was to come. Close to the body of Fowler, and almost under the lamp, there lay another covered with a plaid. Gilbert had looked, with unshaken nerves, on many a scene of horror, but now, for a moment, his head turned giddy and the light grew dim, when he recognized in that bloody pall the plaid of Miss Montalvan! He pressed his hand upon his eyes and looked again. Motionless and silent the body lay under its bloody pall. That fatal plaid! It was but one short week ago since he had given it her. How she smiled and blushed! How proud and beautiful she looked when she went to the pier-glass and tried it on! And now!——

Gilbert steadied his nerves, went forward, stooped over the body, and with the blood curdling in his veins, began to raise the corner of the shawl. It was soaked with blood. He saw the delicate white hand, all torn, and dropped the cloth again. The light swam above him. He seemed to be crushed to the earth by an overpowering sense of horror and gloom.

The men he had followed into the stable were passing out again.

"Ye'd better no' lift it, sir," said one of them in a low voice. "It's the corp o' a leddy, puir thing, torn and smashed oot o' a' shape. They got it oot o' the same kerridge as that wan"—pointing to Fowler's. "The doctor's been roond, and sez they're baith as deed as clods. Ye'd better no' uncover it, sir."

Stunned with horror and grief, Gilbert went out into the dark night. He paced to and fro. There was in him a sense of awfulness and desolation, such as he had never felt before. She had been very dear to him, that beautiful girl—dearer than she or any other knew. He could not think of home without her. The past was melodious with her voice: it was radiant with the glory of her eyes. He thought of the time when he saw her first—a little dark-eyed fairy—paddling her tiny skiff in Brodick Bay. He thought of a hundred merry rambles they had had together through the old woods of Dunvarlich—a hundred gallops over the breezy hills—a hundred sails on the sunny waters of Loch Eulan—a thousand delightful evenings they had spent together at home. He thought of that morning when she came, and put her arms round his neck, and kissed him, and said, “Dear brother.” Again, in fancy, he heard her exquisite voice, and saw her stand before him in all the pride of her virgin grace and beauty. How he loved her! How the fond hope—but he was at the door of that dim and awful place again; and that object, over which the lamp-light gloated, drew his eyes towards it with a horrid fascination. There it lay—silent, motionless, dead!

Again he turned away into the darkness with sickening heart. He could only cry with broken voice, “Farewell, Evelyn, farewell.” The light had fallen from the skies. The joy of life had fled.

By and by he found himself standing opposite a *cart-shed* where another lantern burned; and, waken-

ing to consciousness of things around him, he discerned a man sitting whose face he thought he knew. Moving slowly nearer, he saw that it was the fireman, Blacklock, whom he had seen once or twice about the Castle. Blacklock had escaped, as by a miracle, but with several severe bruises and a deep gash in his leg. He had been carried in a state of insensibility to the farm-house, where his wound had been dressed. On coming to himself, he had anxiously questioned those around him, and learned that both engine-drivers had been killed; but, being unable to hear anything about Jenny, he had contrived to drag himself from one spot to another till, in the cart-shed here, amongst several other bodies, he found all that was left of the poor girl he had loved so well. And there he sat with haggard face and vacant look, gazing on those familiar features, now pale and ghastly in death.

Gilbert's heart was moved.

"Ah, poor soul! is she gone too?" he said, in tones of deep and touching sympathy. He stepped forward and laid his hand on Blacklock's shoulder. "Poor fellow! God comfort you."

Blacklock turned up his haggard face, and looked at Gilbert for several moments with a dull vacant stare. •

But the deeply affectionate greeting—the kind words slowly penetrating his dull ear,—woke him from his torpor at last, and a gush of tears came into his eyes.

"Thenk'ee, sir, thenk'ee," he said, in a voice laden with emotion. "It's God's wull, sir. She's dead

and awa' noo, sir. They're deed and awa' baith o' them."

Gilbert, from the aching depths of his own heart, tried to console him; and, observing his maimed and bruised condition, asked him if he could do nothing for him?

"Thenk ye kindly, sir; but dinna' mind for me," said Blacklock, looking down vacantly at his bandaged leg. "It disna' metter what comes o' me noo."

"Don't say that, like a good fellow," said Gilbert. "We must get you removed. The house is full; but see, let me throw this round you,"—and, taking off his own cloak, he folded it round Blacklock. "Now, keep up your heart; and I'll go and see if any conveyance can be got to take you to more comfortable quarters."

Blacklock tried to speak, but his emotion was too great. He clasped Gilbert's hand between his own; and, releasing it, sank back into his old attitude of despair.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE APPARITION.

DIVERTED in some degree from his own woe by the hope of relieving his fellow-sufferer, but still mourning with inexpressible sadness over his irreparable loss, Gilbert went round to make inquiries about a conveyance. There was nothing of the kind left about *the farm*. The carts of every description were away

already. He was directed to the next farm—for all the inhabitants of the district were by this time astir. But the same story met him there. He saw two lights further on, and went; but they were only cottars' huts, and he had again to turn away disappointed.

By this time he had wandered to some distance from the scene of disaster. The night was dark and wild. The wind howled over the wold dismally, and strange noises rose in the air. Gilbert's mind was still full of the horrors he had left behind him. He had got out upon what seemed a lonely moor; and as he crossed it seeking for the road, phantom shadows seemed to go moaning by, and every now and then some dark object before him would assume the form of that silent heap over which he had seen the lamp-light gloating, or else the dead body of Fowler with the eyeballs protruding from the ghastly and distorted face.

Suddenly he saw a light glimmering over the moor. He stood and watched it awhile. It glimmered steadily from the same point, and he conjectured that it must be coming from the window of some farm-house or cottage. He turned in that direction, hoping this time for success.

It took him a long time to cross the moor. The ground was uneven, the night was dark, and his spirit was weighed down with a sense of desolation. At last, after getting over one or two dilapidated walls, he found himself approaching a house. It was, so far as he could make it out, a strange, eerie place,

going apparently to decay. There was no one stirring near it. Even the light he had seen was now gone: but there was a window that glowed fitfully with the dull light of a fire within.

Gilbert had to pass this window to reach what seemed a door. Peering in as he did so, he started, for what should he see, by the dim, flickering fire-light, but a figure, in a sitting posture, with *her* face and form exactly, but its forehead bound with the white ligaments of the dead!

Rooted to the spot, Gilbert gazed at this new apparition—so beautiful, so like what *she* had been. He pressed his hand upon his eyes, and looked again. Still the spectre was there; its hands folded, its head inclined forward, and its forehead bound in white.

Suddenly, while he gazed, a door beyond the figure opened; and a woman, with a candle in one hand and a warm drink in the other, came in. The figure moved its head—the light shone clearly upon it—God above! it was she! it was his lost sister found again!

Gilbert sprang to the door—his head giddy with delight. The door yielded to his pressure, and in a moment he was in the room.

Miss Montalvan, for it was really she, had heard the hurried footsteps and risen in alarm.

"Gilbert!" she exclaimed, with inexpressible joy, the moment she saw him.

"Evelyn, dear Evelyn, my own dear sister! God be praised for this. You are alive—you are spared to *me*."

He threw his arms round her, strained her to his breast, and kissed her again and again.

"O Gilbert, what a fearful thing this is that has occurred!" she said piteously.

"Fearful—fearful indeed," he replied. "But I can only think of the joy of finding you alive. O Evelyn, I cannot express it. I thought I had left you dead at the farm-house. There was a horribly mutilated body lying covered with your plaid. It lay next Fowler's, and I never doubted"—

"Fowler's!" exclaimed Miss Montalvan starting wildly. "Is he—is he dead?"

"He is, God help him!" Gilbert replied. "He was found with the life crushed clean out of him."

Miss Montalvan looked at him horror-stricken, and pressed her hands upon her bosom as if in pain.

There was a long pause.

"I never doubted but the other was you, Evelyn," said Gilbert at last. "The man said it was the body of a lady found in the same carriage."

"Ah me! poor creature!" exclaimed Miss Montalvan with deep emotion, "has she also perished? Yes, yes; I lent her my plaid. She felt the night air: she had come in heated. So I got her to take it. Poor lady!"

It was with difficulty that Gilbert could get any explanation from Miss Montalvan of her own escape, so profound was the impression made upon her by the intelligence of Fowler's death.

By and by, however, he succeeded in eliciting some account of it. She did not disclose the reason why

she had consented to fly with Fowler; but her narrative of what followed was to this effect:—She had left Perth with the resolution to escape from him at all hazards. When, after the train passed Auchterarder, she found that Fowler and the other two in the carriage were composing themselves to sleep, the idea flashed upon her of leaping from the train. She looked out but could see nothing for the darkness. At last, watching her opportunity, she committed herself to God, opened the door suddenly and sprang out into the darkness. She alighted upon an earthen bank, was bruised a little about the head, but was not so much stunned by the fall as to prevent her from rising at once to her feet. The bank above her was precipitous, so she crossed the rails to the other side, very narrowly escaping another engine that went past at that moment like a thunderbolt—the very wind of its passage nearly blowing her down. With some difficulty she reached the little farm-house where they now were; here she got shelter and every attention that kindness could dictate, and had not been an hour in the house when news reached them of a frightful collision a little farther along the line.

“Thank God, dear Evelyn, that you, at least, are spared,” exclaimed Gilbert fervently.

A conveyance was got; Blacklock was brought from the place where Gilbert had left him: and the good woman of the house gave them all the best accommodation in her power. In the morning a carriage was sent for to convey them to the nearest railway-station. Early in the afternoon they reached Dun-

varlich, where their arrival caused unbounded thankfulness and joy—the household having passed a night and forenoon of agonizing suspense.

Blacklock was brought with them to the Castle, where he was properly tended, and was soothed by the warm sympathy of Mrs. Caie and all the servants, with whom poor Jenny had been a great favourite.

By this time her body, along with those of her father and Fowler, had, in accordance with instructions left by Gilbert, been brought to Perth for interment.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HERE A LITTLE AND THERE A LITTLE. THE LAST OF
FOWLER. REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

THE catastrophe we have described cast a profound gloom over the whole town and neighbourhood. It seemed as if there were scarcely a family which had not to mourn the loss of some relative or friend. Amongst the many whose hearts were wrung with grief, there were few that suffered more acutely than Mr. Mitchell. At Campbell's house he saw the two mangled bodies lying stretched under the same sheet. He prayed with the poor broken-hearted widow; he tried to comfort her in her agony and desolation; but his own spirit was filled with agony and remorse.

He went home and shut himself up in his room. There, with his head bowed down between his hands, he wept tears of bitterness, such as I hope that you, my reverend reader, may never have occasion to shed. He thought of Campbell's first interview with him—he thought of the happy change that one year of sobriety had wrought in him—he thought of the cheerful and thankful face with which he had come to him only the week before, ready to complete the terms of their friendly compact.

“Had I consented, this frightful catastrophe would have been averted.”

This was the thought that wrung the good man's soul with agony. Every fresh detail that reached his ears, went like a knife into his heart. Visions of the dead passed before him in ghastly array, and pointed their fingers at him in silent upbraiding. He saw a hundred homes desolated—widows moaning in their desolation—little orphans crying in their helplessness. In uncontrollable agony he clasped his hands and flung himself on his knees before God, praying for mercy; and feeling that he could willingly give up his own life to retrace that one fatal step, and revoke its awful consequences. The clock struck four. He had to prepare himself—with what feelings may be conceived—to go and attend the funeral.

The Rev. Mr. Flex, who had so kindly invited Campbell to fill his first glass, was far too reasonable a man to agitate himself with any such absurd and painful reflections. It was a most melancholy event *that collision*, but in Mr. Flex's view all such things

were dispensations of providence, and what more could be said upon the subject? Mr. Flex, however, as was his custom in such cases, contemplated the improvement of the event in his afternoon sermon on the coming Sabbath, and had already begun to prepare an account of the collision which he expected would be very effective, and would give an air of sufficient novelty to one of his stock-sermons on the uncertainty of human life, which he meant to attach to it.

"It has been really a melancholy affair," he said in a pious voice, as he sat at dinner that day with his wife and family, and held up between his little black eye and the window a sparkling glass of sherry. "Really a melancholy affair. That poor man Campbell, I see, was amongst the killed. You remember I told you he was sitting opposite me at the dinner. A very decent man."

Mr. Flex paused, put the glass to his lips, and took a little sip with a critical air.

"That's better stuff than we got from Pillans at the same money, my dear," he said parenthetically, as he put the glass to his lips again and emptied it.

"Ah yes! poor man," he resumed in his former tone; "both he and his daughter killed. Very sad. Campbell a reformed man too; and promising, I was told, to be a most valuable person in Mr. Mitchell's church. It is a mysterious dispensation of providence. Truly, its ways are not as our ways.—Susan, my darling, pass that decanter to your mamma."

The sound of lumbering wheels was heard passing in the street below. It was the hearse with its black

nodding plumes moving slowly up the street on its way to the cemetery, with the bodies of Campbell and his daughter.

The mortal remains of Fowler were interred in the ancient burying-ground of the Macdonalds of Dunvarlich, at the Abbey; and the family went into mourning. They buried the memory of his failings and evil deeds along with him. On the day of the funeral Miss Montalvan shut herself up in solitude. With tears in her eyes she stood by the open casement and watched the mournful cavalcade go slowly down the avenue; and when it passed out of sight, she flung herself upon the couch and sobbed convulsively. She was thinking of Fowler as he had looked, to her enchanted gaze, on that day when they rode together through the wood, and he told her of his love. She remembered how he shook back his dark locks, and turned his face towards the glorious sun, and said that her love was filling the world with new light and glory. When she thought of that, she sobbed again as if her heart would break. Within an hour the mournful procession would wind its way round the skirts of that very wood, and stop in solemn silence at the place where Fowler had kept little Monsieur Lapetite and all the rest of them so merry on that well-remembered day.

CHAPTER XL

WHEREIN A SECRET IS REVEALED, AND CERTAIN
MYSTERIES SATISFACTORILY EXPLAINED.

WEEKS went by; and, at the Castle, faces were brightening and hearts were growing blythe once more. Dr. Sutherland was himself again; and the old baronet, faithfully adhering to the new régime, was slowly but steadily regaining his strength.

Miss Montalvan's mysterious flight with Fowler, and her equally mysterious return, had long been the subject of eager discussion amongst the servants at the Castle. No satisfactory solution of the difficulty could be arrived at. Amongst the servants at Dunvarlich, Fobbles had succeeded by mysterious nods and winks in conveying the impression that he was in full possession of all the details, but had been bound over by the most awful asseverations not to disclose them. Fobbles' importance increased accordingly; and many were the efforts made to betray him into the disclosure of his secret; but all the practised diplomacy of Mrs. Caie, all the Delilah-like coaxings of the little maid Lizzie (who was secretly suborned and set on by Mrs. Caie), failed to extract from Fobbles the smallest atom of information—a fact not to be wondered at when it is considered that Fobbles was in as profound ignorance as the rest of them.

Gossip in and around Perth was also busy for a

while, and innumerable stories were circulated, but so extravagant and contradictory that they refuted themselves.

All this time Miss Montalvan had concealed from the family the true state of the case, and they had too much delicacy of feeling to press her for any explanation which she did not choose to make. She said to herself—"Why should I give them pain by disclosing a disagreeable fact which it is not necessary for them now to know, and which they will probably never learn if I do not reveal it?" In other respects she was all that she had ever been. She went about just as of old, heeding no rumours. Mrs. Caie could only shake her head, and remind her interrogators that Miss Montalvan was the daughter "o' a Spennish calleballero"—a circumstance that in her mind seemed sufficient to account for anything.

Gilbert and Miss Montalvan were more together now than they had used to be—often out alone on horseback. No one remarked it particularly. They had been so much like brother and sister all along.

One evening they were in the drawing-room together. Gilbert was walking up and down the room; Miss Montalvan, reclining gracefully on one of the soft couches, was reading to him from a new volume of poetry. Mary had been called away.

When Miss Montalvan laid down the book upon her lap, to rest awhile, Gilbert, stopping beside her, said,—

"Evelyn, I want to speak to you."

"*Speak on, Monsieur le Capitaine,*" she said, lean-

ing her head back upon the soft cushion, and turning her beautiful eyes up to his face, evidently without the faintest suspicion of what he was about to say.

"It is something serious: something deeply affecting us both."

She did not move; but her look became more grave.

"I have long loved you as a sister, Evelyn," he continued, with his eyes fixed upon hers; "but my love is fast changing into something deeper and more passionate. I must speak now. I must know, before it be too late, whether this may go on, or whether it must stop."

She rose hastily. Her face turned deadly pale. Her power of utterance seemed for the moment gone.

"My dear Evelyn, don't look so frightened. I have thought it better for both of us that I should speak in time—before your answer can utterly blight my happiness or make you feel uneasy in my society."

Miss Montalvan's eyes were looking into his with a wildly-sad expression. Once or twice she tried to speak, but in vain.

"You have now," resumed Gilbert, taking her hand, "the power to fill my life with joy—to complete in purest happiness the love that has been warming in my heart during all these bygone years. But do not look like that, Evelyn. Do not fear me. If you cannot love me with a tenderer love than heretofore—say the word, and I will tear this passion from my breast, and we shall be to one another as we have ever been."

"Gilbert! oh Gilbert!" she cried suddenly, "I am grieved. I am pained. What is this that has come over you? O, have I not been a true sister—have I not loved you dearly, devotedly enough, in our dear, old, delightful way, Gilbert, that you should think for one moment of another love? O stop. This is enough. Gilbert, you have forgotten yourself."

"No, Evelyn, I am deeply serious."

She seemed pained, and tried to withdraw her hand. Gilbert detained it.

"No, no," she said impatiently, "it cannot be. It must not be. You know it."

"Evelyn, do not tamper with my happiness. Why should—why must it not?"

"I thought," she said, with something like haughtiness in her tone. "I thought the simple word was to suffice. You said it would. But if you must know the reason—tell me, Gilbert, would you have me bring sorrow on another heart?"

The light fell from Gilbert's face. A moment his lip quivered, and then he said sorrowfully,

"Forgive me, Evelyn. Forgive me for inflicting pain which I did not intend. God bear me witness, that had I known you were engaged"——

He saw her start at the word, and raise her eyebrows as if in astonishment.

"Well," he said, "that your heart was another's, which is the same thing."

"Gilbert, Gilbert, this is cruel."

"You spoke of another heart."

"Yes," she said, looking at him severely, "I spoke

of one to whom we understand you to be engaged—one, Gilbert, who surely deserves your love, and, as I was glad to think, possessed it."

The light sprang again into Gilbert's face, brightening into a smile.

Miss Montalvan's eyes flashed with indignation now.

"Gilbert!" she said, plucking her hand from his, "I could not have thought this of you. Have you forgotten what you owe to Miss Fanny Brooks, that you conduct yourself like this?"

Gilbert now fairly laughed.

"Miss Fanny Brooks! Why, Evelyn, there is no such person that I know of."

Miss Montalvan's irids dilated with surprise.

"Perhaps," said Gilbert, "I should have told you so, when you and Mary used to quiz me about my 'little pet.' But I let you go on for the fun of the thing. Why, 'Fanny' was a little terrier of Mrs. Brooks'—her pet as well as mine."

"Gilbert, you are trifling with me. You know whom I mean. Miss Brooks."

"But there is no Miss Brooks."

"The major's daughter, then, whatever her name be."

"But the major's daughter is married already—was married months before I ever saw her."

Surprise and anger struggled in Miss Montalvan's look.

"Have done with this equivocation!" she cried. "You know whom I mean. The one who nursed

you—who watched over you day and night—whose divine eyes—oh Gilbert, must I recall your own words to you?"

Still the smile was playing on Gilbert's face.

"The one, then," said Miss Montalvan with flashing eyes, "whose likeness, if I mistake not, is dangling there now"—and Miss Montalvan pointed suddenly to the locket that hung from his watch-guard—"while (shame on you, Gilbert!) you so far forget yourself as to speak of love to another, and offer me what belongs by right to her!"

"Calm yourself, my dear Evelyn," said Gilbert, for her lip was quivering with indignation. "I am not so faithless as you think." He took the locket in his fingers. "The beautiful face, the divine eyes, you remind me of, are indeed here."

He touched the secret spring of the locket, and opened it.

"Look, Evelyn," he said, turning it towards her. "You should know the face."

She obeyed. But judge of her surprise—her amazement—her utter confusion—when, dropping her eyes to the locket, she beheld there a miniature likeness of herself!—a little copy of the photograph taken the year before for her aunt, and which, as the reader will remember, had once so mysteriously disappeared.

And so it was her own self that Gilbert had so long adored. Gilbert's eyes were upon her. Her face became suffused with blushes. She turned aside, trembling violently.

"Evelyn," said Gilbert, putting his arm round her,

and bending his head over hers, "what say you now?"

What could she say—what could she do? Her heart filled with tremulous delight, He felt that she was his.

CHAPTER XLI.

WHICH EXHIBITS SIR CHARLES UNDER THE NEW AND THE TRUE RÉGIME, AND BIDS EVERYBODY GOOD-BYE.

WHAT more needs to be told? Before eighteen months had gone by, Gilbert had taken his beautiful bride to their new home by the banks of Loch-Eulan. Fobbles was installed there as "buttons," with fresh honours. Blacklock, a little lame but otherwise healthy and vigorous as ever, was appointed gate-keeper. Campbell's widow keeps house for him, and loves him like a mother for the sake of poor Jenny.

Dr. Sutherland had become a professor in Edinburgh. Mary was his wife, and was proving to be all that she had promised to be, and more. The students' parties were not forgotten. Some of the students of those first years are getting rusty now in their recollections of Professor Sutherland's lectures; but they are never going to forget the pleasant evenings they spent at his house.

As for Sir Charles, his gout had gone away with its cause, and there he was at Dunvarlich as hale, and

hearty an old gentleman as you would desire to see. Gilbey and Son got no orders from him now, though they continued sending him a gentle reminder every year in the shape of a printed circular, which brought a queer smile into the baronet's face as he passed it into the waste-basket. There was no more old port or Burgundy in his cellar; but what was a great deal better, there was sight in his eyes again, there was elasticity in his step, there was health in his looks and happiness in his heart.

"Yes;" as Fobbles remarked on one night of high festival in the servants' hall, "Total Habstinence has did it. Vy, I know'd," he continued as he poured out a glass of beer for himself—"I know'd as them cold water fellers, and hommy-apothecaries and sich like wos all my eye. There was that carroty-viskered cove, Wingwie, as said the guv'ner's gout wos owin' to habsence of fatality, and then commenced wavin' his 'ands over 'im like a reg'lar Egyptian saucer. Curt-ing rises again. Scene London. Enter Dr. De la Deuce. 'Ah,' sez he, your gout's all owin' to morbid ambition in your sister,' and accordingly biles him in a wayper-box. Then comes the hommy-apothecary, and says it's general debility in his hinstitootions, and all sorts o' bosh, and gives him drops of deluded tinkers and hommy-apothic pillows. Last of all comes Slokel with his black mixtures as would knock a hoss down two miles off, with the smell of, and says it's consternation in the guv'ner's bowels, and accordingly put him under wigoious mistreatment and wery *near brings* down his poor gray 'ed in sorrex to the

grave. And what was it, after all, as ailed the guv'ner? Wot? Wy, not wun hattom," cried Fobbles, looking round and giving an energetic slap to the table—"not wun hattom but the wine,—insidious wiper!—which he took into his unsuspectin' buzzum and wouldn't let go."

"Ah, wot a thing it is!" added Fobbles pathetically, as he laid his hand unconsciously on his glass, "wot a thing it is wen a man, 'igh or low, becomes adapted to drinkin' 'abits!"

"Thinks it does 'em good too," added Fobbles with a sigh. "Oh, frightful halleluyah-cination!"

Overcome by this reflection, Fobbles finished his beer, and wiped his mouth mournfully with his pocket-handkerchief.

You will be glad to hear that the Rev. Mr. Mitchell is now the minister of a very active and prosperous congregation in Perth. The Rev. Mr. Flex, I regret to say, has not prospered so well. The truth is that he went on to indulge rather freely in the gift of God, without first ascertaining where, precisely, the use ends, and the abuse begins; and having, on several occasions, betrayed considerable unsteadiness in his legs, in the public streets, and ended once by assaulting his inoffensive beadle, and considerably damaging that functionary's nose, the reverend gentleman was brought up before the presbytery, and finally deposed from his charge.

The Rev. Mr. Maccabees of Auchinmuir still holds his ground as of old, and is at all times ready to bewail the evils of intemperance; and to declare the advan-

tages of total abstinence—to most people. His only regret, as he will tell you, tapping his waistcoat in the old fashion, is that total abstinence does not happen to agree with himself. He tried it, but found that his constitution needed a mild stimulant. And it is very evident that his constitution needs something, for his nose is growing exceedingly red and pimply.

At Dunvarlich Mrs. Fayding has come to keep house for the baronet—her children being now grown up and her husband dead; for even homœopathic globules could not keep him alive for ever. She finds a faithful assistant in Mrs. Caie, who is looked upon as a fixture in the Castle. M'Lodle is also there, grave and magnificent as ever, and looked up to with awe by several new subordinates, male and female. Lizzy, having been a favourite with her young mistress, went with her to Edinburgh. She and Fobbles, who, as we have said, followed the Captain and his lady to Loch-Eulan, felt the separation very much, but kept up a tender correspondence which, on Fobbles' side at least, was very spirited and voluminous. The following, however, is the only letter of his which we are able to present to the reader. It appears to have been written while Fobbles was confined to his bedroom with neuralgia.

“My hown troo love Lizzie, This is to let you know as i am confined to my hown compartment with gum-boil and a hallegory all hup and down the side of my 'ed, hoping you is all the same. Yoor guv'ner is here *just now*. Reglar jolly. Him and the Capting and 2

millintary hossifers as is old chums of 'is, wos out on the moors yesterday, and shot 40-too brace grouse and a gray gomeril (witch last is not for heating). They're all off a 'unting today. Missis went with em to the Meat. The Capting's got a new hoss for her—a reglar A 1 true blue Harabian steed—wot goes like the dickens and beats its own shadder.

“Little Master Charly is growing up beautiful. Nuss says she never know'd a child like im. And its puffectly troo. As the poet exklames—

‘He flurishes in immortal yooth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elephants
The rek of matter and the crash of worms.’

To witch I may add the meezles, witch he ad last week wery slite. You should see the little feller, my eye, a-climbing up the popular tree in the back gyarden. Its a site that is. He is wery fond of my recita-shuns, witch Ive had to pollish up and get new ones. On Wensday he made me give some of em afore Missis. So I gave my name is Norman, on my father's ills, the Grampus feeds his flocks, witch you will remember Lizzie, my troo luv. You shoold a seen Master Charly klapping his hands and Missis smiling so sweet. Of coss it wos werry gratifying. Missis you see is a harry-stocracy and knows wot's wot. She and the Capting is precious proud o' Master Charly. Its werry touching to me to see the 3 of em wen the tea goes in. And wen I beholds little Master Charly a-climbing up the Capting's knees, with his little legs witch is white and scarlet, catchin' hold of the Capting's wiskers,

oh how I wishes I was a father! (Hoo knows but I may sumtime, Lizzie, eh?) Your werry true luv, most respectably,

HENERY FOBBLES."

We may state that Fobbles' humble aspirations after fatherhood have since then been realized. He and Lizzie are installed in a fruit and stationery shop in Dundee, and have a very small and very fat little boy, who climbs up Fobbles' knees, and would pull his whiskers, if he had any to pull.

* * * * *

Christmas-eve has come round again, and at old Dunvarlich a merry party has gathered round the crackling fire. All the faces are bright and happy: nuts are cracked, and stories are told of bygone days. Gilbert and Evelyn are there; so, of course, are Dr. Sutherland and Mary. And now there are five rosy young faces besides. The laughter of children rings in the hall, and the patter of little feet is on the stairs.

The little ones are all boisterously fond of grandpapa, and romp about him and climb up his big chair. And grandpapa makes a tent of a newspaper, and gathers them all under it to play at gipsies with him, and crack nuts and eat confections.

* * * * *

But the bright faces are gone for the night now. Grandpapa's Christmas-box for the little folk is not to be opened till morning. The children are in their cozy little cribs, no doubt dreaming of it. The lights

are all out, save the big lamp that fills the hall with its dim red light. In the drawing-room, which they have left but an hour ago, the fire-light glows, and leaps into little winking flames. The silent shadows dance upon the wall. Hush! do you hear that soft Æolian melody that fills the vacant halls? It is the angels singing in again the day of the Lord who saved us. Good-night. Let us tread softly. They know not that we are still astir. Once more, good-night!

THE END.

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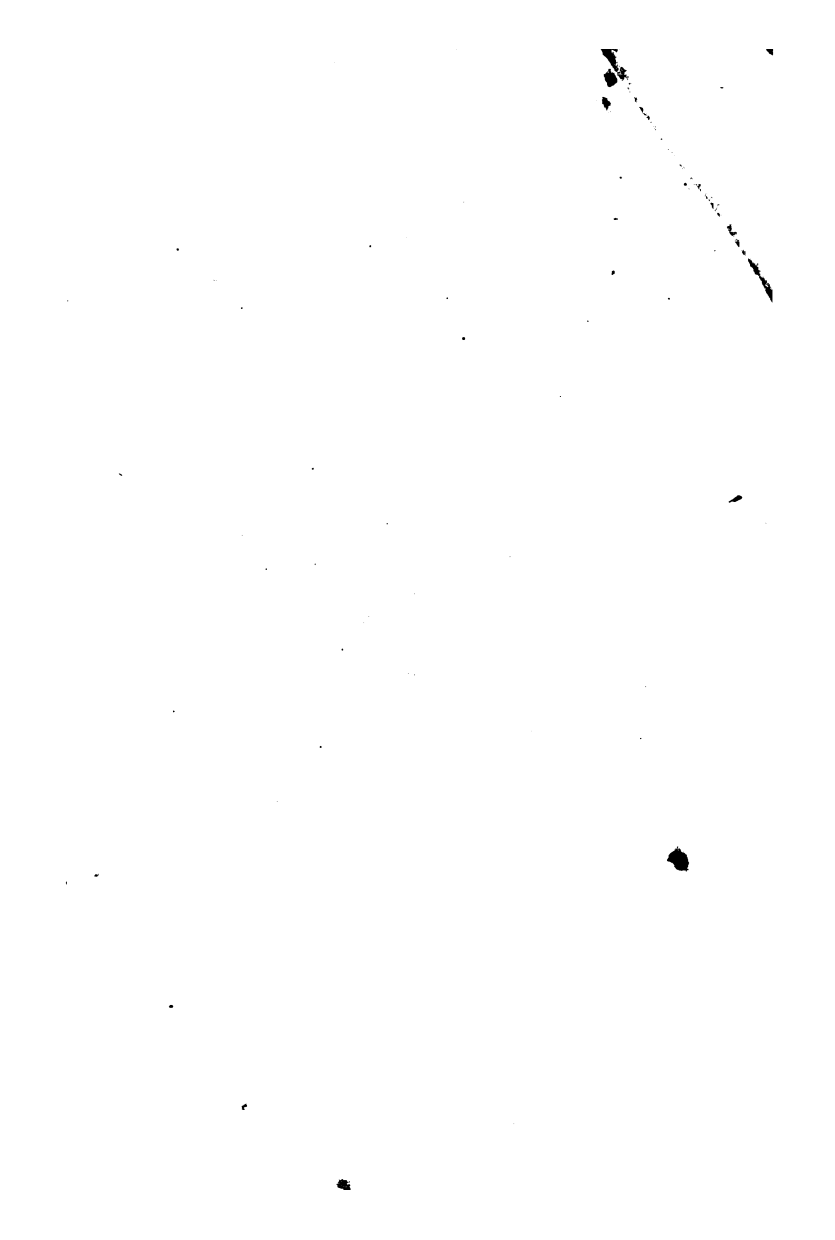
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No.....

